Avi Bernstein, our new director, was attracted to BOLLI for many of the same reasons our members are: the quality of the participants, the depth and breadth of the curriculum, and the connection to Brandeis. Creating places for people of every religion and ethnic background with a hunger to learn is important to him, and he enjoys engaging with those who enjoy learning for learning’s sake. He admires Bernie Osher’s brilliance in recognizing the synergy between lifelong learning and the work of universities and in providing seed money to Osher Lifelong Learning Institutes at many schools. Furthermore, Avi had friends on the faculty at Brandeis, was acquainted with several BOLLI members, and knew he would take pleasure in interfacing with them.

Bernstein views himself as a facilitator in a highly collaborative environment that is an element of the shared governance envisioned by BOLLI founder Bernie Reisman, and he feels that it is his job to carry on Reisman’s legacy of a program with academic learning at the center, but which also has an essential and unique community aspect and is peer-run and peer-led.

“Let’s see the organization clearly, then pause, correct course as needed, and extend what we are doing right. We need to examine aspects not currently attended to—like the ties to Brandeis—and develop a clear vision of where we are heading,” he said. He is hopeful that changes will be made not just reactively and reflexively, but only after thoughtful consideration involving himself, member leaders, and Vice Provost Michaela Whelan. To this end he has had meetings over the summer to learn what issues are most urgent, and he has prioritized those that need clarification or change.

Avi wants to enhance the connection between Brandeis and BOLLI, for he believes the more regular contact we have the more both parties will appreciate and value each other.

A native of Orlando Florida, Bernstein always felt a bit like a fish-out-of-water in the South, and when he studied at Brown he realized he was better suited to life in the North. His journey to find his life’s work led him to study at The Pardes Institute for Jewish Studies in Jerusalem, to take a fellowship in ethics and politics at Princeton, and ultimately to receive his Ph.D. in Religion from Stanford.

Avi lives in Newton with his wife Elizabeth Nahar and their four children (two teenage daughters and twin ten-year-old sons), and he enjoys playing baseball and basketball with his family.
The BOLLI Council held its annual meeting with the membership in May, with Council Chair Joel Kamer presiding. Joel led off with his Council Report. The winners of the Council election—Charlie Raskin, Alorie Parkhill, and Peter Schmidt—were identified and the retiring Council members—Lois Silver, Marvin Grossman, and Joel Kamer—recognized for their service. BOLLI’s new director, Avi Bernstein, was introduced.

The standing committee Chairs summarized their committees’ work and thanked those who had contributed. Joel Kamer recounted the many innovations introduced during his administration, including our new space, a third day of classes, extensive Enhancement activities, the on-line Bulletin, and the Marketing Task Force. The Endowment Fund has grown to $1.4 million. We hope to grow the fund to $2 million, at which point it could generate $50K per year towards BOLLI’s expenses without touching principal.

Vice Provost Michaele Whelan spoke about strategic plans for BOLLI. There is no intention to try to increase the size of our membership. However, plans for future development may involve on-line learning. BOLLI members have worked successfully with foreign students from the Heller and Business Schools. Brandeis would like to extend BOLLI’s inter-generational involvement to other university communities, including undergraduates.

During the member feedback sessions, several contradictory design proposals were advocated for the Gathering Place:

- Straight rows to promote safety vs. round tables to promote conviviality
- Quiet areas to promote study vs. unlimited conversation to promote community
- Banishment of the snack table to cut down on noise, messiness, and traffic congestion vs. maintenance of the status quo.

The Council agreed to address these three matters.

The Banner wishes to announce some changes to our staff.

After many years of hard work as editors, our colleagues Naomi Schmidt and Carol Grossman have decided to leave the Banner. All of us on the Banner staff have valued Naomi’s sharp eye, her helpful suggestions for new articles, and her omnipresent copy of The New York Times Manual of Style and Usage. Carol’s easy-going manner has won over those authors who were reluctant to lose even a single word when we tried to shoehorn their original drafts onto the printed page.

Replacing Naomi on the staff will be Brenda Gleckman. Beginning with the October issue, Jane Kays will assume the role of co-editor. – Richard Glantz, publisher
Welcome from Our New Council Chair

by Mike Segal

We welcome Avi Bernstein, our new BOLLI Director. Avi brings superb leadership skills, with new ideas and vision for our programs. Avi’s insightful and thoughtful style will provide inspiration and perspective. Please also join me in meeting and extending a warm welcome to our 36 new BOLLI members as we embark on stimulating fall courses, complemented by an ever-expanding selection of activities.

My sincere thanks to our many hard-working volunteer committees and task forces. They have created a notable curriculum, to be taught by exceptional SGLs. New registration materials have established a highly successful course registration process. We have an exciting Lunch and Learn speaker series and an amazing set of enhancement activities, affinity groups, and theatre and adventure groups, providing a rewarding schedule of activities year-round. Members are encouraged to join these organizations, provide new ideas, and start new friendships.

The dedication and commitment of our peer-led membership—the key to BOLLI’s success—continue to provide us with ever-expanding opportunities. Our Membership Committee and Brandeis Alumni Office offer forums for prospective members to experience BOLLI mini-classes and see our community in action. The weekly BOLLI Bulletin joined our monthly Banner and biennial Journal in keeping us informed about our BOLLI activities and friends. Member and staff suggestions led to major modifications to our Turner Street environment in the past year. To assist in audio-visual enjoyment, equipment upgrades were installed in the classroom and gathering spaces. The Gathering Place reduced clutter, added plants, and underwent multiple changes for the convenience, safety, and enjoyment of our members. We created a small, comfortable seating area, bulletin boards, and information centers. Rooms were set aside to permit members to study or chat during lunch, and a Wall of Fame now enhances our lobby.

I also wish to acknowledge the exceptional efforts of our staff, Ilana and Erin, during the previous year of change, as well as the critical assistance of acting Director Gwenn Smaxwill in the period prior to Avi’s arrival. Finally, Joel Kamer’s leadership was instrumental to the successful transition to Turner Street and the expansion of our programs and initiatives.

I am looking forward to seeing you all this fall and to BOLLI’s new era under Avi Bernstein’s guidance. We have much to look forward to.

On the Lookout for New SGLs

As this semester begins, we’re starting to plan BOLLI’s Spring course offerings and are looking for new topics and new Study Group Leaders. Whether this is your first semester at BOLLI or you’re an “old timer,” think about becoming an SGL. If you intend to propose a course for Spring, let us know as soon as possible, but no later than Nov. 5. Course proposals are due by Nov. 26. You can contact me or any Curriculum Committee member for more information or just to explore an idea. We will provide advice and support as you write your proposal. Another way to get support in developing a course is to sign up for Learn & Lead. Contact Myrna Cohen, myrna.cohen@comcast.net, to find out more.

– Naomi Schmidt, Curriculum Committee Chair, naomischmidt@comcast.net
All That Jazz

by Phil Radoff

BOLLI favorite Gil Harel returned to lead a valedictory seminar as he prepares to leave Brandeis for the challenges of a faculty position at Baruch College—and matrimony. In a departure from his previous classical music seminars, Gil turned to an early love—jazz—and delighted a large group of participants eager to learn more about this all-American genre.

Gil set out to equip his listeners with the tools needed to distinguish and appreciate the changing styles in the history of jazz, from its origins in Ragtime in the early years of the twentieth century to the much later ear-splitting sounds of Albert Ayler and Ornette Coleman. We came to understand that jazz compositions have a definite structure, as in the syncopated 16-bar rags of Scott Joplin and Louis Armstrong’s New Orleans style jazz with its “swung” eighth-notes and scat singing. We learned that the difficulty and expense of maintaining and arranging music for large swing bands like those of Benny Goodman and Duke Ellington gave rise to smaller ensembles displaying the rapidly changing harmonies and be-bop virtuosity typified by Charlie Parker. Be-bop in turn yielded to the complexities of modal jazz exemplified by Miles Davis’s *So What* and John Coltrane’s *My Favorite Things*. In more recent years, jazz has become increasingly varied and complex as musicians have learned to incorporate electronic technologies into sound production. In short, the story of jazz is one of rapid change and experimentation with no sign of slowing down.

Frequently illustrating his points at the piano, Gil succeeded in imposing structure on an otherwise seemingly amorphous body of music and helped us to understand and appreciate what many of us only imperfectly grasped.

Gil, your friends at BOLLI wish you the best of luck in your professional career and much happiness in your marriage. Come back and visit when you can. You’ll always be welcome.

Food, Glorious Food

Snacks at BOLLI have a long tradition, beginning with the small table at Gosman that usually featured a large bowl of pretzels, goldfish, chips, and other things that came from large, inexpensive boxes. The quality of our fare has changed since those days, but not consistently. We know we don’t need added sugar, salt, or fat, but it is very easy to pop whatever is available into our mouths, without being mindful. However, a nosh is part of conviviality as well as a pick-me-up between classes. This year, the Snack task force would like to encourage more healthy offerings. We are hoping that when it becomes your turn to make a snack contribution, you will think about the importance of what goes into our bodies as well as our minds. Consider fresh fruit, cut-up veggies and hummus, fruit breads, cheese and crackers, and home-made treats. We will all be grateful—and healthier.

Nomad from Baghdad

As part of the “Fridays with Friends” program on October 19, Ron Levy will describe his journey through the five countries that have been his home. Ron was born in Baghdad in 1938. In addition to Iraq (twice), Ron has lived in India, England, Canada, and the U.S. Ron will describe his own experiences and also draw upon the memoirs of his parents in describing and contrasting the living conditions, culture, and lifestyles that impacted his upbringing. He will illustrate his talk with family photos.
This outstanding Rapaporte Seminar, led by Prof. Paul Morrison, Chair of the English Department, posed the question: were the movies made during the Depression merely intended to entertain an impoverished nation, or was there a more profound message? By the end of the week most felt the answer was the latter.

Depression era films were produced under the Motion Picture Production Code, the industry’s exercise in self-censorship to avoid legislative action. The Code reflected the fear that the wide accessibility and democratizing nature of film might threaten the social and political status quo.

In *The Wizard of Oz* (1939), Dorothy (Judy Garland), marginalized on her Kansas farm, travels to Oz, and becomes the central character. The film plays with reality by depicting real Kansas in unnatural sepia-tone, and unreal Oz in color. In Oz, Dorothy discovers that Kansas held all she really wished for: “there’s no place like home.”

In *It Happened One Night* (1934), Director Frank Capra tested the Code’s limits regarding the portrayal of sexuality and class structure. In this “screwball comedy,” established movie norms are turned upside down: rich, unhappy socialite Ellie (Claudette Colbert) learns to be ordinary and proposes to poor, working class Peter (Clark Gable); they demonstrate their love for each other by quarreling. Ellie finds happiness after learning that character is more important than money. Like Dorothy, she willingly returns to her roots (and marries the man of her father’s choosing).

Thanks to Prof. Morrison for providing the context to enhance our appreciation of these film classics.

Dark shadows, blind alleys, shady characters, and desolate city streets are hallmarks of film noir. In the latest Billy Flesch Rapaporte seminar, *The Maltese Falcon: the Novel and the Film*, we were led into the labyrinth of noir and visited the Hollywood studios where this genre was born.

In the 1940’s there was little disposable income for most Americans. The big studios sought to cut corners on production costs. The new genre of film noir reflected the cynicism of the age and offered potential for budget reduction as well. Enter *The Maltese Falcon* by Dashiell Hammett. The seedy detective of dubious morals, the beautiful and deceitful blonde, and the gluttonous mastermind modernized a literary revenge motif replete with sexual undertones.

The novel was dialogue-heavy and ripe for translation into a movie script. Hollywood studios had a host of talented actors—Bogart, for example—and directors who were not “A-List” but were eager for work. Even John Huston, who was just establishing his reputation, was available. The script did not need a large cast of extras; there was no need for special lighting; the sets could be made in the studio or from stock shots. The story was told through dialogue—terse, sharp, direct, and fast. Given these ingredients, the studio was able to produce the film relatively inexpensively.

The *Maltese Falcon* seminar enabled Billy to embark on soaring “flights of erudition,” as we watched other film clips of noir, discussed literary motifs and their translation to film, defined production jargon, and enjoyed Billy’s trademark quips on wide-ranging but related topics. Flesch did it again with his twelfth seminar—he left us laughing, stimulated, and begging for more.
Rapaporte Seminars: Forging Political Opinion

by Ron Levy

In June, Jill Greenlee, Assistant Professor of Politics at Brandeis, discussed the forging of political opinion in the short- and long-term, as part of the BOLLI Rapaporte Seminar series.

In this fascinating seminar, we studied political socialization—learning and development over the lifespan—to understand how individuals formulate their most central political beliefs and attitudes. What institutions and life cycle events shape how individuals develop politically over the long-term? What is the role of history in forging political generations? We discussed the role of media and political campaigns in shaping public opinion. In exploring those topics, we read and discussed scholarly research of political socialization and public opinion, and reflected on our own political development, sharing our observations of political campaigns over time.

The students left with some key take-aways:

- The critical years in which our political opinions are formed are ages 18 to 25, when both individual and contextual factors are important.
- Media have the short-term potential to shape the content of individual political attitudes and influence electoral outcomes, from selectively priming the issues they wish to highlight to framing how the issues are presented.
- Campaigns increase voter knowledge, but robot-calls are ineffective. The role of the Internet is still unclear.
- Americans are capable of issue-voting on economic issues but less so on social issues.

Time and again over past general elections, we have seen that the party in power suffers at the polls during hard economic times, in reflection both of their own condition and that of the country.

[Note: Prof. Greenlee and two of her colleagues will return for a post-election Lunch and Learn talk on November 7.]

Lunch with the Possible/Real President(s)

On Fridays, October 5, 12, 19, 26, and November 2 and 9 from 12:30 to 2:00 P.M. we will be engaging in an informal discussion of the presidential election. There are no "speakers"—just us—looking at the issues (including the media coverage) and using our experiences, we will evaluate the candidates and the process. Bring your lunch, your ideas, and your concerns. The discussions will be held at Turner Street in the large room.

Four years ago these community discussions worked well. There are meaningful opinions on all sides. Let’s get together and talk.

- Harriet Starrett
Council Report
by Bonnie Alpert

- Three committees have new Chairs this year:
  - Study Group Support – Joyce Hollman
  - Curriculum – Naomi Schmidt
  - Enhancement – Arlene Bernstein and Steve Messinger (continuing)

- Curriculum Committee – ten new SGLs this fall, eight of whom are current members

- Snacks task force – snack tables will be moved to ease congestion around the Blue and Purple classroom doorways

- Director
  - forming self-study groups of BOLLI members to learn about our program's operation, process, structure, and methodology in order to compile recommendations for "best practices"
  - intends to handle all member requests for exemptions and waivers in a fair, consistent, principled, and transparent way according to criteria addressed in the BOLLI Guidelines and best practices resulting from the self-study initiatives

- Marketing task force – Carol Fischman is crafting the BOLLI marketing message

- Web site task force – Peter Schmidt is working on updates to the BOLLI web site

- Membership Committee – sent registration materials to 400 potential new members

- Gift Funds – the June letter drive and phone-a-thon resulted in donations from 48 households

- Enhancement Committee
  - almost all Friday morning slots during Fall are filled
  - Book Discussion meetings will be scheduled two times a year
  - Play-reading Group will meet every six weeks, beginning September 28th

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**International Friends**

Members love this program because the pleasure and enrichment participants gain from it are long-lasting, often well beyond the period of actual participation.

The Friends pairs a BOLLI member (and spouse if desired) with one or more foreign students in a Heller School graduate program. Most of these students are college graduates from third-world countries who are in the U.S. for the first time. One of the objectives of the Friends is to help the students adjust, learn what's available in the Boston area, and develop a closer relationship and understanding of our people. A by-product of the program is that the BOLLI Friend may develop a close relationship with people from countries that we rarely know much about, like Indonesia, Pakistan, Laos, Tibet, Congo, and Gambia.

The students are very busy with a ton of schoolwork in a language that is not their native tongue. The BOLLI Friend makes no demands, but can provide relief or release. The relationship can require as little or as much time as both sides want: sometimes only one or two face-to-face contacts in the year, or as many phone calls as needed, maybe an occasional Friday night dinner or museum visit or shopping trip. Students invite the BOLLI families to their Culture Nights, where BOLLI Friends meet other foreign students. Note that BOLLI Friends are prohibited from having any financial obligations to the students.

The Friends organization hosts two events in the year: small brunches (10-15 people) for groups of Friends and their students, and an all-American potluck dinner and square dance. Both events have always been enthusiastically received! Most Friends feel they have gained at least as much as they have given. Some have even created lifelong friendships.

- Leonora Feeney
Excerpt 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., Sept. 23  (7 P.M.)
**Brahms: The Three Sonatas for Piano & Violin**
Robert Levin, period piano by Johann Streicher
Daniel Stepner, violin
$15 for BOLLI members

Sun., Oct. 14,  (3 P.M.)
**50th Anniversary Tribute to Irving Fine**
The annual concert in honor of the founder of the School of Creative Arts, composer Irving Fine.
Neal Hampton, conductor
Lydian String Quartet members and their colleagues
Fine *Serious Song: A Lament for String Orchestra*
Fine *Notturno for Strings and Harp*
Speakers: Richard Wernick, Yehudi Wyner, and Martin Boykan.

Sun., Oct. 28  (11 A.M. concert, 10 A.M. coffee)
**KaffeeKonzert II with Robert Hill**
Three partitas for harpsichord by J. S. Bach

Sat., Oct. 20  (8 P.M. concert; 7 P.M. lecture)
**Pablo Ziegler Classical Tango Quartet**
Pablo Ziegler, piano
Hector Del Curto, bandoneon
Jisoo Ok, cello
Pedro Giraudo, double bass
Latin Grammy-winner Pablo Ziegler, the preeminent living member of Astor Piazzolla’s groundbreaking ensemble, leads the group in exquisite arrangements of his own compositions as well as the music of tango legends like J.C. Cobian and Piazzolla.
$15 for BOLLI members.

LAURIE THEATER

Oct. 18–20  (8 P.M.) and Oct. 20–21  (2 P.M.)
**Escape from Happiness**
Written by George F. Walker                 Directed by Doug Lockwood

While some audience members may see reflections of their own family relationships in *Escape from Happiness*, it is certain that George F. Walker did not intend this play to be a guidebook for how to deal with difficult family issues. What does Nora, the matriarch of the family, do when her husband returns after abandoning the family and setting the house on fire? She pretends that he is a visitor who just happens to look like her "deceased" husband. This eccentric family tries to deal with their issues—or not deal with them—by escaping to a realm of pure fantasy. Through denial, they come to atone for their past missteps and betrayals.
$5 for BOLLI members.

ROSE ART MUSEUM

Thur., Sept. 20
**Opening Celebration — Dor Guez: 100 Steps to the Mediterranean**
Experience the compelling vision of one of Israel’s most respected young artists in his first major U.S. museum exhibition. The artist explores the overlooked histories of the Christian Palestinian minority in the Middle East. Guez’s work traces the memories and present experiences of three generations of his family, the Monayers, and how their lives interweave with distinct sites in contemporary Israel.