NEW FACE AT THE RABB SCHOOL

by Naomi Schmidt

I interviewed Karen Muncaster just four months into her position as Vice President of the Rabb School, which includes BOLLI and is one of the four Schools that comprise Brandeis University.

Karen holds a Ph.D. from Boston College. Her professional background is in Education, and she has held positions at Middlesex Community College, Southern New Hampshire University, Lesley University, and the Boston Architectural College. Her recent concentration has been on Continuing Education and Academic Technology.

She has been getting to know BOLLI by initially meeting with small groups of member leaders and hopes to meet with the general membership in the near future. She states that she is very impressed with what she has seen of our organization and our members so far, and says, “This is the kind of community I want to be in when I retire.”

As good as BOLLI is, Karen would like to see even more engagement with the Brandeis community and hopes that our members increasingly take advantage of the resources that the university provides, including the Arts, Lectures, and Health and Wellness offerings. She applauds programs such as Sages and Seekers and International Friends, and sees our members increasingly setting examples for more traditional Brandeis students that you can be interesting and engaged in learning when you’re over 60.

Karen’s Vice Presidential status bodes well for our lifelong learning organization, since she regularly meets with the heads of the other Brandeis Schools and has access to Brandeis administrators at the highest level. She sees herself as someone who can open doors, find connections that will enhance our program, and identify other opportunities of potential interest to adult learners. She values the program that we have built over the past 15 years and wants to learn more about what members would like. She looks forward to building relationships and trust and getting to know people on a more personal level.

In her spare time, Karen is a cyclist, a voracious reader, and an enthusiastic vegetarian cook. She and her husband travel twice a year, usually internationally, including trips to Europe, China, India, and Brazil. Her goal is eventually to visit all of Europe and retire to southern France. Combining her interest in academic technology with that of lifelong learning, she dreams of becoming an engaged and “connected” member of a program like BOLLI without leaving that beautiful part of the world.
Advisory Council Nominations Process Underway

by Bonnie Alpert

On July 1, 2015, three of the four liaison positions in the BOLLI Advisory Council (BAC) which are filled by an all-BOLLI balloting procedure will become vacant. In anticipation of this, we have begun the process established in the BAC charter for filling these positions.

In October, a call for nominations went out to members via email and the BOLLI Bulletin. Then, at its November meeting, the BAC—which, per the charter, is the nominating body—conscientiously worked to select a slate of highly capable nominees to fill the upcoming vacancies. The BOLLI community will receive notification of this slate by December 31.

Between December 31 and March 15, any additional BOLLI member can be nominated for one of these positions via a petition signed by 25 members. Once this petition is verified by the current liaisons to the membership-at-large, the nominated person’s name will appear on the ballot.

The existence of one or more petition candidates will result in a competitive election. If no petition candidates are nominated, the slated nominees will be presented to the BOLLI membership for ratification.

The retiring members and their positions are:
- Peter Schmidt: membership-at-large liaison (having filled a special one-year term)
- Arlene Weintraub: liaison to BOLLI affinity groups
- Ed Finerty: liaison to BOLLI inter-generational groups.

Susan Bradford, the second elected membership-at-large liaison, will remain for one more year in her two-year term in office.

The other seven BAC positions—standing committee chairs and working group liaisons—are filled by qualified BOLLI members whose names are put forward by the outgoing chairpersons and who are appointed by the director. These BAC members serve the terms that are specified for their positions in the BAC charter.

The full text of the BAC charter is on the BOLLI member web site.

Winter Lecture Courses
(complimentary for BOLLI members)

The American Revolution: Radical or Conservative?
Dr. Craig Bruce Smith
Thursdays, Jan. 15–Mar. 5, 10:30 A.M.–noon

Exploring Musical Spaces
Jared Redmond
Tuesdays, Feb. 10–Mar. 3, 10:30 A.M.–noon

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Conveying Passion in the Classroom

by Joan Kleinman

In her BOLLI courses, SGL Suzanne Art combines her two loves: history and art. She strongly believes that art is a big part of history and that art tells a lot about culture. This principle informs her approach to teaching her courses, *Painters of the Italian Renaissance* and *Let’s Go For Baroque.*

Suzanne likes her students to know about a painter’s life and the period in which he/she worked. Then she analyzes how this is reflected in the paintings both content-wise and stylistically. As she shows specific works of art, she encourages comments and successfully elicits excellent conversations in class. Suzanne is gratified if students discover a piece they are particularly drawn to and is pleased when students find that what they have learned in her classes enhances their visits to museums.

Suzanne taught for 16 years at the Fay School, a private school for grades K–9 in Southborough, MA. She found the history textbooks esoteric and boring to young people so she began writing her own materials. She has authored 13 books on various periods of history from pre-historic times to Ancient Greece to the Renaissance which are geared to middle and high school students. Now Suzanne is working with her publisher to update these books with new electronic formats, more color, and new images.

Suzanne loved being in the classroom and missed the kids and the learning experience when she retired. Shortly after joining BOLLI, about five years ago, she decided to “take the plunge” and teach adults. She chose the Renaissance period for her first course as she knew that BOLLI members are well-traveled and would find the art of that time somewhat familiar and appealing. She loves the creative process and finds both writing and creating new BOLLI courses joyful endeavors. She has a B.A. in History, an M.A. in French Literature and Language, and an M.A. in Teaching. With a passion for art extending even back to childhood when she toured European museums with her parents, Suzanne realizes that “the older I get the more I like art.”

After retiring, but before joining BOLLI, Suzanne surprised herself by developing an affinity for gardening in a big way. One day she just decided to pull out the copious amounts of honeysuckle that edged the large backyard of her Lincoln home. She then started designing and planting various beds, mostly of perennials, aiming to have beauty in every season but with low maintenance. “I dug and planted everything myself,” she says quite proudly, and now feels her plants are “like her babies.”

At BOLLI, Suzanne serves on the Adventure Committee and happily participates in the French Group with other fluent speakers. BOLLI has become the center of her and her husband’s social life and she has made many solid friendships here. In fact, her husband Robert, a professor of International Relations at Brandeis, often tells her that he’s glad she joined BOLLI. Suzanne’s students and fellow members echo that sentiment.

Spring classes begin March 10th and end May 14th, with no holiday break
TEACHERS TALK

by Marjorie Roemer

Well, what do we say? What do we talk about? Everything from Northrup Frye to eBoard.

This is an ad hoc, drop-in group that meets three times a semester to talk about anything and everything that comes up in our thoughts about leading study groups. A handful of people come to every meeting; a larger number come when there’s something specific they want to talk about. Although I convene the group, I think of it as “leaderless.” At each session we go around the room and ask: “What’s on your mind?” And then we spend our hour and a half discussing what emerges.

A topic that often surfaces is the strain some SGLs experience between lecturing to disseminate needed information and creating interactive discussions. How to do both? Various people offer suggestions and examples. We talk about the particular challenges and advantages of teaching the BOLLI population. While one might be well advised, in any classroom, to be mindful of the experience students bring with them, in our particular circumstance the experience and knowledge of the students is especially significant. We have talked about conducting “guided inquiry,” underlining the sense that the course is “guided,” that is, shaped and designed in advance, and yet it is “inquiry,” an exploration that we are experiencing together, as a group.

A key principle at BOLLI is the support of different kinds of courses and different styles of teaching. Accordingly, Teachers Talk encourages discussion about teaching techniques without imposing any orthodoxy about them. What can we learn from one another? How can we refine our practice by reflecting on it with others? To this end, Teachers Talk is a low-key place to do just that. Because the group is small—anywhere from 6 to 20—because it is in no way required and implies no judgments or constraints, it opens the way for free and honest exchanges. It’s a place where you can express doubt or uncertainty, anxiety, or even delight.

Over the years of our meeting, we have touched on ideas about “collaborative leadership,” distinctions between designing syllabi and framing the scope of a course, focusing on outcomes as distinguished from input, and thinking about the many ways to ask questions. We even debate the use of the word teaching. All positions give us food for thought. It is a place to re-see our shared experiences and to enjoy them even more.
A VISIT TO GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
by Phil Radoff

This is another in a series of occasional articles describing Osher Lifelong Learning Institutes in other parts of the country—Ed.

I recently attended the 90th birthday celebration of a dear friend who is active in the OLLI at George Mason University. At the celebration, I spoke to the GMU OLLI director, Jennifer Disano, and Glenn Kamber, its president, and learned that it differs from BOLLI in many respects.

George Mason is part of Virginia’s university system and receives public funds. The GMU OLLI was formed in 1991 and is the only Osher organization serving the large Northern Virginia community. With a membership of 1200 and courses held at three locations in two counties, the GMU OLLI is considerably larger than BOLLI.

The governance of the GMU OLLI and its affiliation with George Mason are also very different from those of BOLLI. The GMU OLLI is a tax-exempt legal entity, one of only a small number of such OLLIs in the country. Its relationship with GMU is defined by an affiliation agreement, under which GMU furnishes the OLLI rent-free, dedicated campus facilities, encourages professors to teach OLLI courses without remuneration, and seeks to promote programs in which GMU students and OLLI members jointly participate. The OLLI, in turn, purchases certain support services from the University and provides scholarships to University students. The membership elects an 18-person board of directors, which appoints four officers. All officers and directors are volunteer members of the OLLI and have plenary responsibility for establishing policies, determining the OLLI’s mission and programs, approving budgets, setting dues, designating a statutory office and agent, and preparing an annual report. The OLLI has, at present, one full-time paid employee, the director, who reports to the president of the OLLI and is responsible to its board, and eight part-time paid employees.

Courses are offered during two eight-week terms in the spring and fall, plus a six-week summer program and a four-week winter program. Dues are currently set at $375 per year, with no limit on the number of courses in which a member may enroll (until courses are fully subscribed). Members may take courses at any of the OLLI’s three locations at any time during the year.

Course offerings are many and varied. For the fall term, the catalogue shows 102 courses in subjects that include art and music, literature, theater, religion, science, current events, and languages. There are also special events, field trips, and clubs similar to BOLLI’s extra-curricular activities. As at BOLLI, most courses are led or taught by GMU OLLI members, but a significant minority are taught by GMU faculty and prominent members of the local academic and professional community.

As its members have come to appreciate, the GMU OLLI plays a major role in providing many and varied educational opportunities for Northern Virginia seniors.
BOLLI member Kenneth Rosenfield started working in the food business at 14. Saturdays he could be found packaging chickens in a large waterfront warehouse that housed his uncle’s poultry business. Less than 30 years later, Ken and his brother-in-law, George, opened Kens at Copley, a 200-seat restaurant opposite Trinity Church and the Copley Plaza Hotel. It was open 20 hours a day, seven days a week. As it was unique in serving food until 3 A.M., many theatrical and sports figures frequented Kens after late night shows and games. Ken is a great storyteller and recounts tales about notables such as Leonard Nimoy, Marlene Dietrich, Maureen O’Hara, Bill Russell, John Havlicek, Jackie Mason, James Beard, and Jack and Ted Kennedy.

Ken worked long hours, alternating one week of the 7 A.M. to 5 P.M. shift with a week of 4 P.M. to 4 A.M. He spent much of his time supervising staff and chatting with customers, often as they waited in line for a table. An energetic, engaging, talented person, Ken also found time to ski, do black and white photography, play jazz drums with local groups, and sing, dance, and act in community theater musicals. For many years he had secretly longed to work in the theater. This desire was fanned by praise from several directors who headed a theatrical group that included Leonard Nimoy. Ken and Leonard became part of a quartet that sang in movie theaters to entice people to movie houses as television had begun to keep them at home. However, Ken resisted the lure of the theater, knowing how hard it would be to support his family as an actor.

After establishing Kens at Copley, Ken and George opened other restaurants: 3 Kens Pubs and the more up-scale Kens by George where Ken kept a set of drums so he could accompany the piano player at night.

In 1984 the business was sold. Kenneth was now retired at age 62. He taught himself to do creative cooking, as his partner, Carole, was still working long hours. He also built a darkroom in their basement, took advanced workshops, and spent many hours photographing and printing. He had shows in local venues and was gratified to have an abstract photograph accepted in a juried show at the Berkshire Museum in Pittsfield.

In 2001, Carole retired. Together, she and Ken joined BOLLI. A wonderful poetry class led by Matthew Ruggiero inspired Ken to start writing poetry. Now 92, he still participates in BOLLI writing workshops. His poems have appeared in all the BOLLI Journals. Ken also participated in Fridays with Friends, telling stories of his travels and times in the Air Transport Command in China during World War II.

What’s next, Kenneth?
BOLLI Baby

BOLLI congratulates Megan and Kate Curtis, proud parents of Ella Katharine Curtis, 7 lb. 6 oz., who was born at 5:26 P.M. on November 12, 2014

An Enhancement Program Special Event
Fri., Dec. 5th, 10:30 A.M.-noon, Turner Street

AVOID ID THEFT
How to Deter, Detect, and Defend Against Identity Theft
Presented by: Tony Daniels, Vice President, Century Bank, Chestnut Hill, MA

Three Lunch and Learn Events You Don’t Want to Miss

Tue., Nov. 18

Theatre
“Suppressed Desires” by Susan Glaspell
preceded by Sophie Freud reviewing “Psychoanalysis in the early 1900s”

Wed., Nov. 19

Jazz
The Lincoln Traditional Jazz Drummers
Manson Solomon on piano
Jack Martin on trombone
Rob Saunders on U-bass
Tim Eskey on drums
Santo Pullara on clarinet
Alan Shapiro on trumpet
Jimmy Mazzy on banjo (guest)

Thu., Nov. 20

Old Standards
Ben Sears and Brad Connors
“Over There! Songs of World War I”
SPINGOLD THEATER CENTER
(all concerts in this venue are $15 for BOLLI members with ID)

Presented by the Brandeis Theater Company

Nov. 20–23
The Conference of the Birds
by Peter Brook and Jean-Claude Carrière

Based on the poem by Farid ud-Din Attar
Directed by Hafiz Karmali

All the birds of the world declare the realm a mess and set out on a journey to seek their king, the Simorgh, a beautiful and benevolent bird of Persian myth. Their voyage through the deserts and valleys is laced with riddles and parables, deep spiritual questions, and great temptations. Discover what lies at the end of their quest in this lively, light-hearted production for both children and adults.

Jan. 30 – Feb. 1
Two Dance Stories

Created by Susan Dibble and Ensemble
Directed by Susan Dibble

This celebratory and soulful dance performance tells two unique stories through movement. Students work side by side with professional performers under the direction of Professor Susan Dibble, resident choreographer and master teacher for Shakespeare & Company. Inspired by the poetry of W.H. Auden, one piece illustrates how people are propelled into movement through the rhythms and sounds of time, and asks what happens when the ticking hands of the clock stop. The other piece revolves around a small shop that hatches a plan to heal people through the ghost costumes it creates.

Mar. 12–15
The Way of Water

Written by Caridad Svich
Directed by Robert Walsh

While the headlines have faded, the effects of the 2010 BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico still run deep. Explore this crisis through the lives of two couples fighting valiantly to survive in the spill's aftermath. OBIE Award-winning playwright Caridad Svich has woven a subtle and personal journey that effortlessly evokes the larger disaster and its subsequent impact.

SHAPIRO CAMPUS CENTER

Tue., Dec. 9 (4 P.M.)
Messiah Sing

Sing along with the Brandeis-Wellesley Orchestra and the University Chorus in the annual community concert of Handel’s masterpiece. Music scores and seasonal refreshments provided.

MUSIC AT MANDEL ATRIUM

Wed., Nov. 19 (noon)
Afternoon Jazz

Bob Nieske, bass
Billy Novick, clarinet
Free admission and free box lunch

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