North Korea Today

by Phil Radoff and Jack Curley

Few topics have generated as much recent interest as U.S.-Korea relations, so it was with more than the usual degree of expectation that a full complement of BOLLI members, and a generous sprinkling of Road Scholar guests, signed up for the summer lecture series, “Between Trump's America and Xi's China: Lifting the Veil on North Korea.” The initially scheduled presenter, Brandeis History Lecturer Matthew D. Linton, was obliged to withdraw, but BOLLI was most fortunate to engage Peter Kwon, a Harvard postdoc in Korean Studies and a Korea specialist, to fill in.

At the start of the series, Peter posed the question, “How do we understand, rather than dismiss, North Korea?” Given the country’s sealed borders and tight grip on media, the task seems unachievable, with Western press often filling gaps in knowledge with half-truths and sensationalism. But during the course of four information-packed lectures, supplemented by a substantial amount of pre-assigned material available to participants through internet links, Peter explained the complexity of political, social, economic, and military developments in both halves of the Korean peninsula.

We came to appreciate the importance of Korea’s location in understanding much of what we know about present-day Korea--an island surrounded and colonized for centuries by the larger and historically hostile powers of Japan, China, and the Soviet Union.

We were reminded that, after the end of World War II, the Allies enabled Korea to throw off the yoke of long-standing Japanese domination. The end of the war also brought about the separation of the country at the 38th parallel into two nations, ethnically similar but politically divergent: North Korea, where Soviet influence prevailed, and South Korea, increasingly under U.S. influence and protection.

The Korean War soon brought death and devastation to both countries. The destruction was such that, in 1955, it prompted Vengalil Menon, Head of the U.N. Korean Reconstruction Agency, to ask, “How can a rose blossom from a garbage dump? This country will not be restored even after a hundred years.” Since the subsequent Armistice Agreement did not include a peace treaty, to this day the two Koreas remain, technically, in a state of war. (Continued on page 6)
A Note from the Managing Editor

by Jack Curley

The Banner has served as BOLLI’s journal of record for nearly two decades. A look at the archives* offers clear evidence of the professionalism and talent of the many Banner staff members who have contributed to its long and successful run. I am both honored and a bit intimidated to assume the role of managing editor. I have some confidence in my ability to perform the “managing” part of this role, since decades of work honed my ability to plan meetings and make deadlines. But the “editor” part? Not so much. Sure, I can usually spot a misplaced comma or improve an awkward sentence, but the guy I’m succeeding values correct grammar much as a Labrador retriever values hamburger! Submitting the draft of my first Banner article to Phil Radoff was an act of bravery second only to sitting down for a root canal. Okay, so I exaggerate a bit, but only by a bit. Fortunately for me, my friend Phil, editor extraordinaire, has agreed to stay on as articles co-editor, upholding the Banner tradition of exemplary writing. I’m also fortunate that the other stellar members of the team are back for another year.

You’ve heard this before, but we really do welcome story ideas relating to people and places associated with BOLLI, Brandeis, and local sites of interest. Your suggestions, questions, or concerns are welcome any time via email at: jjc1791@outlook.com

Welcome, New Members!

We are pleased to welcome 86 new members from 29 Massachusetts cities and towns as well as one Florida municipality to our BOLLI community. This term, we have 489 total BOLLI members.

Acton: Harriet Deane
Andover: Joan Cohen, Franklin Segall
Arlington: Donna Murphy
Bedford: Jim O’Neil, Elizabeth Sumner
Belmont: Marsha Semuels, Scott Stratford, Nancy Voynow
Boston: Ralph Freidin, Emily Goldblatt, Julie Jaye, Orr Michaely, Yoav Michaely, Penny Steinberg, Linda Wolfson
Brighton: Audrey Kadis
Brockton: Wendy Richardson
Brookline: Marc Kirshen, Joan Thomann, Harriet Yoffee
Cambridge: Muriel Heiberger, Margaret Duncan
Canton: Robert Vandor
Charlestown: Bruce Ettinger, Debra Ettinger
Chestnut Hill: Sheldon Apsell, Hinda Marcus, Carol Markell, Rina Winkelman
East Walpole: Dick Anthony, Becky Siebens
Framingham: Kay Collins
Fort Lauderdale: Ron Gresser
Lexington: Barbara Chandler, Lawrence Fuhrman
Needham: Merle Berman, Bonnie Seider

* BANNER ARCHIVE: www.brandeis.edu/bolli/publications/banner/index
A Social Conscience at Waltham’s Paine Estate

By Diana Young

The Robert Treat Paine Estate, also known as Stonehurst, is an historic home owned by the City of Waltham. On June 22, BOLLI’s Waltham Matters Special Interest Group was greeted by Ann Clifford, the estate’s curator, for a tour of the mansion and a walk on its surrounding property.

The mansion was originally built in 1866 but was too small for the large Paine family, so the home was expanded by H.H. Richardson, the architect who designed Trinity Church at Copley Square. The landscape was designed by Frederick Law Olmsted, of Emerald Necklace and Central Park fame. The property was donated to the City of Waltham by Paine descendants in 1974 and is a National Historic Landmark.

Clifford spent much of the tour discussing the original owners’ concerns for workers and the property’s finely crafted features. Robert Treat Paine was the grandson of the Robert Treat Paine who signed the Declaration of Independence. After adding to his family fortune with railroad and mining investments, the younger Paine spent his life as a philanthropist. His special interests included workmen and their families, many of whom were immigrants. Mr. Paine appreciated their crafts and employed them in the building of Stonehurst. Ann showed us many examples of the woodworking in the interior, including the carved fireplace surrounds, screens, and unique staircase spindles. The pieces are complex, strikingly beautiful, and all hand done by the craftsmen. Ann pointed out that Mr. Paine was a pioneer in affordable housing, banking co-ops, and other community institutions for the working class, and that the Paines invited workers’ groups and their families to annual picnics at the site.

Our group was small, so Ann took us to areas of the house that are not part of regular tours. We saw the family rooms as well as household staff rooms. All the rooms were lovely with impressive views of the landscape. We saw the mill chimney on the Charles River from one balcony and speculated that, when the trees were shorter, the Paines may have had a view of downtown Waltham. The home includes antique furniture, books, and beautiful old plumbing fixtures. We were admiring what we thought were lovely old quilts in the upstairs bedrooms when Ann told us that the upstairs rooms are available for bridal parties at Stonehurst, so, despite looking antique, the quilts came from TJ Maxx!

The property near the home includes expansive lawns, a brick patio, stone walls, and outcroppings with Ice Age scratch marks. Olmsted planted the estate land with flowering bushes and specimen trees which are still present. (Continued on page 7)
We didn’t need the May 22nd death of our subject, Philip Roth, to focus our attention on the importance of this writer, often described as the best American author of the 20th century. But Roth’s passing did add a sense of urgency to understanding the depth and breadth of his contribution to literature and his grasp of tensions we face today.

Some of us were there because of Professor Billy Flesch, a perennial BOLLI favorite known for his depth of knowledge, wide-ranging interests, and boundless enthusiasm. Others came because they wanted to dip their toes into Roth for the first time. Most, however, were rereading Roth after many decades, refamiliarizing themselves with this chronicle of American life, class structure, politics, and sexuality. Roth is of our generation, give or take a few years. As a voice of middle-class Jewish-Americans, he moved us from humor and optimism to disillusionment, through scorched earth intellectual struggles, along a trail which many have traveled.

Every hour produced an “Aha Moment,” an appreciation of Roth’s brilliance. We reread Goodbye Columbus, a coming-of-age novella about how we figure out who we are, separate and distinct from the families into which we are born. In the process, we happened upon Roth’s brilliant short stories, like “The Conversion of the Jews” and “Eli the Fanatic.”

Our sometimes unwieldy group of 40 wrestled with The Human Stain, portraying at least two generations of connected individuals, their physicality, their voices, their relationships, their inadequacies, disappointments, and small successes. The book is an unrelenting exploration of self, with its battle between political correctness and authenticity, between our public selves and our secrets. We reveled in Roth’s construction, deconstruction, and shaping of language, enriched by the word pictures with which he splashes murals upon the walls of life.

At BOLLI, one thing often leads happily to another. Many seminar participants, spurred by the richness of this five-day, 15-hour Roth orgy, committed to (re)reading Roth’s The Plot Against America in anticipation of July’s BOLLI book group discussion. The saga is filtered through the perspective of a Rothian middle class Jewish-American family in the early 1940s. It warns readers about what happens when a powerful leader allies himself with fascist despots in World War II Germany and Japan and succeeds politically at home by pitting different groups of Americans against each other.

Fourteen years ago, Roth imagined nativist Charles Lindbergh taking over the Republican Party and defeating FDR for the Presidency on an “America First” platform. If Roth’s prescience has you breaking out in a cold sweat, you are not alone.
Mozart: The Burden and Gift of Genius

by Abby Pinard

What are we to make of Mozart? How can we account for the breadth and brilliance of the more than 600 works he produced in his short life? One word—often misused but unmistakably correct in this instance—will do: genius. In a week-long seminar, Mozart: The Burden and Gift of Genius, BOLLI favorite Gil Harel led us to a new understanding of the successes and disappointments of Mozart’s life and the transcendence of his music.

Mozart was immersed in music from his birth into a musical family in Salzburg in 1756. His father was a violinist and pedagogue; his mother sang. At three, Wolfgang was absorbing his sister’s harpsichord lessons; by five, he was composing; and by six, he was on tour playing, improvising, and writing music for the nobility of Europe.

Mozart’s genius lay not just in his precocity as a child but in his creativity, his perfect musical ear and memory, his virtuosity on violin and keyboard, and his mastery of every musical genre, producing masterpieces of symphonic, concerto, chamber, operatic, and choral music. Gil guided us through every genre of Mozart’s work, ranging from his early childhood pieces to his final, monumental operas and symphonies.

Mozart wrote music to please his audiences. He composed overwhelmingly in sunny major keys with few dissonances. His music amused, entertained, and delighted the ear. (He delighted, too, in amusing himself with musical jokes and—as we learned from his letters—wordplay and vulgarity.)

Early in the week, Gil acquainted us with a bit of music theory that enhanced our enjoyment and understanding of the music to follow. We learned how Mozart used “sonata-allegro” form, the structural musical model of the 18th century and beyond, to introduce and develop musical themes, and we learned how to follow those themes as they appeared and re-appeared in different ways.

As we concluded our study of Mozart’s work, the question remained: The gift of his genius was clear, but why speak of the burden of genius? The answer was not in the music but in Mozart’s life. Despite acclaim, he struggled to secure an appropriate position and was beset by financial worries. In his last years, as he produced his greatest music—work that should have earned him the lofty lifestyle he coveted—Mozart and his wife lived beyond their means and were in debt. He died at 35, never having achieved fame and fortune worthy of his talents, but for us, the final facet of his genius is that, more than 200 years after his death, his music has lost none of its luster.
After the death of Stalin, the Soviet refusal to make its nuclear technology available, and the later collapse of the Soviet Union, North Korea under the leadership of Kim Il Sung was driven to develop the concept of Juche, or self-reliance. The country also began to look inwardly to define its own brand of communism and to direct its own military and political future. As conceived by Kim and expanded by his son and successor, Kim Jong Il, the principle of “military first” was promoted to encourage the populace to accept the development of nuclear weapons capability, which would assure North Korea’s independence and its ability to resist foreign control and forced regime change.

Kwon explained that South Korea has developed its own brand of self-reliance. In terms of economic advancement, the South has far surpassed the North. To emphasize that point, Peter displayed the striking satellite images of the peninsula at night, revealing the brightly lit activity in the South and the virtually complete darkness in the North.

As further evidence of South Korea’s embrace of the outside world, Kwon pointed to South Korea’s co-hosting (with Japan) of the 2002 World Cup. Despite being given little chance of success, the South Korean team, coached by Dutchman Guus Hiddink, reached the semi-finals, the first Asian country to do so. Hundreds of thousands of fervent South Korean fans took to the streets to celebrate. Coach Hiddink was later made an honorary citizen, and, to this day, South Korean travelers flock to his Netherlands museum.

South Korea has been justly proud of its substantial achievements in the promotion of democracy and its development of non-military technology in recent decades. But it has also encouraged its largest technology companies, such as Samsung and DaeWoo, to develop the country’s own military capability without drawing a great deal of attention to that mission in its dealings with the outside world. Interestingly, the founding members of several of these companies were collaborators during the Japanese occupation, offering further evidence of the oftentimes puzzling relationship between the two Koreas and their neighbors.

Much of the final lecture was devoted to current day topics, including the recent Trump-Kim summit, which Professor Kwon views as a great success for North Korea. The striking differences between the two Koreas’ economies and styles of government lead him to believe that reunification of the peninsula is unlikely to come any time soon. With their knowledge enriched by Professor Kwon’s keen observations, BOLLI lecture participants will watch warily as this complex international saga continues to unfold.
Leonard Bernstein: The Power of Music
from Brandeis Promotional Materials

Leonard Bernstein is headed back to Brandeis where the exhibition *Leonard Bernstein: The Power of Music* will be on view from October 4-November 20. Organized by the National Museum of American Jewish History (NMAJH) in Philadelphia, this exhibition explores his life, Jewish identity, and social activism.

Audiences may be familiar with Bernstein’s works, notably the 1957 musical *West Side Story*, but not necessarily how his music was informed by the political and social crises of his day. Here, visitors will meet a man who expressed the restlessness, anxiety, fear, and hope of an American Jew living through World War II and the Holocaust, Vietnam, and turbulent social change around the world.

An innovative interactive multimedia display, “Samples of Faith,” encourages visitors to peel back the many layers of Bernstein’s compositions, often to their roots in his early years in Boston. Those roots and his years at Brandeis are important to understanding his complex life, says Brandeis University Professor Jonathan D. Sarna, NMAJH’s chief historian. “He’s perhaps the only great American composer who heard his first serious music in a synagogue.”

“As our nation continues to confront issues of race, religion, and what it means to be an American, Bernstein’s life and music take on new, personal meanings for every audience,” says Ivy Weingram, NMAJH’s associate curator and organizer of the exhibition. “Leonard Bernstein is remembered as a passionate, larger-than-life personality, charismatic conductor, devoted educator, and skilled musician.”

*Dreitzer Gallery. Friday, October 4 through Sunday, November 18 from 12:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Thursdays open until 8:00 p.m. Additional materials at Slosberg Music and Shapiro Admissions Centers.*

The Paine Estate (Continued)

To end our tour, we entered the extensive woods and walked part of the Western Greenway and the Bull Run Trail. Ann showed us 13 acres of woods that the mayor had considered taking from the Paine Estate for a new high school. Fortunately, another property was chosen for that campus.

The mansion is open to visitors on weekdays from 12-3, and the trails are available daily from dawn to dusk. For trail maps, go to www.walthamlandtrust.org, and for the many special site programs, see www.stonehurstwaltham.org. The estate has parking, including handicap accessible space, close to the house. Self-guided mansion tours are $3, while guided tours for seniors are $5. The house is also accessible. There is no charge to walk the large lawns and multiple trails. In addition, the Bull Run Trail is wheelchair-friendly.

*View from Bull Run Trail. (Photo courtesy of mapio.net)*
Upcoming Campus Events
Compiled by Ellen Moskowitz

SLOSBERG MUSIC CENTER

*Lydian String Quartet Concert.* Saturday, October 13, 8:00-10:00 p.m.
Brandeis’s resident string quartet performs Gubaidulina Quartet No. 4, Prokofiev Quartet No. 2, and Beethoven’s first “Rasumovsky” quartet. Tickets $20; $15 for Brandeis community and seniors (55+). Purchase online, by phone at 781-736-3400 or in person at Brandeis Tickets, located in the Shapiro Campus Center atrium. **Free concert “Sneak Peek” at the Mandel Center Atrium on Wednesday, October 10 from 12-1:00 p.m.** Performance followed by a light lunch buffet.

ROSE ART GALLERY

*Passage.* Friday, September 7 - Sunday, December 2. Wednesdays through Sundays, 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. An exhibition of highlights spanning seven decades of the museum’s permanent collection, curated by Henry and Lois Foster Director and Chief Curator Luis A. Croquer. This exhibition includes important works by Manuel Alvarez Bravo, Marisol Escobar, Wifredo Lam, Robert Motherwell, Louise Nevelson, and Pablo Picasso. Admission is free.

SPINGOLD THEATER

*Dream a Little Dream.* Laurie Theatre. Thursday, October 18 through Sunday, October 21 at 8:00 p.m. with matinees on Saturday, October 19 and Sunday, October 20 at 2:00 p.m. Conceived and choreographed by Professor Susan Dibble (pictured left), *Dream a Little Dream* brings the dreams of two sleeping people to life. A company of students and guest artists alike perform in this original theater piece. Tickets $20; $15 for Brandeis community and seniors (55+). Purchase online, by phone at 781-736-3400, or in person at Brandeis Tickets located in the Shapiro Campus Center atrium.

WOMEN’S STUDIES RESEARCH CENTER, KNIZNICK GALLERY

*“More Weight” by Rachel Stern.* Until Friday, October 26, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. In 1692 Salem, Giles Corey refused to confess to the crime of witchcraft. “More weight,” he said as he lay beneath the pile of stones that crushed the life out of him. Philadelphia-based artist Rachel Stern capitalizes on our fascination with macabre history, arranging views of a reinterpreted world from the language, logic, and images surrounding these events.

Promotional photographs acquired online.