From Rosie’s Place to Brandeis...

by Jack Curley and Phil Radoff

What do Rosie’s Place, Boston’s highly regarded community center for homeless women, and Brandeis’s precollege summer program for high school students have in common? Both have been led by Sue Marsh, who currently serves as Executive Director of Precollege Programs at Brandeis.

For more than 20 years, Brandeis has offered a summer residential program of academically rigorous experience for rising high school sophomores, juniors, and seniors. Program components have historically included BIMA, the University’s summer Jewish arts institute, and Genesis, which “seeks to build a strong, vibrant community of future Jewish leaders.” While not all Precollege participants go on to attend Brandeis, there are currently nearly 200 graduates of the program enrolled in the University.

Sue arrived at Brandeis in February after 20 years as Executive Director of Rosie’s Place, which provides numerous programs for all who identify as women and are in need of assistance. Sue knew and greatly admired the founder of Rosie’s Place, Kip Tiernan, who she says had the ability “to meet every woman where they were at in their lives and treat them with unconditional love.” With its $7.8 million budget, 71 staff members, and more than 2,000 volunteers, Rosie’s Place provided Sue with strong leadership and management skills. She was attracted to Brandeis by the chance to use these skills to extend a lifelong passion for promoting social justice to a new arena and to change how precollege programs work. Assuming the role of Executive Director of Precollege Programs afforded her the unique opportunity to seek ways to include low income and underappreciated students in an educational resource that has historically been denied them.

Under Sue’s guidance, Brandeis’s longstanding BIMA and Genesis programs have been paired with a program for low income and underrepresented youth. This summer, the new program offered three tracks: *Queer Academics and Activism*, which “allows high school youth to grapple with issues that are urgent and relevant to the LGBTQIA+ community;” *App Design*, which provides the opportunity to “delve deep into cutting-edge software such as HTML and CSS;” and *Service Corp*, which combines a “love for service with hands-on volunteer projects and deep intellectual exploration into the issues.” (Continued on page 6)
A Note from the Managing Editor

by Jack Curley

With this issue, the Banner begins its 20th academic year of reporting to the BOLLI community. A glance at the archives (see the masthead below) offers clear evidence of the depth and breadth of the hundreds of articles written and distributed over the past two decades. The current Banner team and I offer our admiration and appreciation for the fine work done by the many authors and editors who preceded us in our roles.

The year ahead marks the beginning of a new era, since with this issue the Banner exits the world of print and embraces the digital age. While some readers may miss the tactile joy of holding a print publication, the transition will allow us to offer better visuals and more in-depth articles, and provide new opportunities to interact with our readers. The current issue, which is being distributed solely in the Bulletin as a linked pdf document, is but one step toward our digital future. Watch for much more to come as we soon launch a Banner blog site with all the bells and whistles you expect to see in a digital publication.

Questions or comments are always welcome at jjc1791@outlook.com

Welcome, New Members!

We are pleased to welcome 76 new members from 26 cities and towns to our BOLLI community. This term we have a total of 505 BOLLI members.

Andover: Margo Goldman, Stephanie Segall
Antrim, NH: Victor Rosansky
Arlington: Barry Ginsberg, Lyn Shamban
Ashland: Karen Maloney
Belmont: Joseph Boskin, Bill Levine, Janet Sand
Brookline: Michael Foran, Janet Goddard, Judah Schwartz, Gail Wolfsdorf
Cambridge: Nancy Cott, Muriel Heiberger, Jill Jacobitz, Charlie Small, Paula Small, Bob Zhu
Chestnut Hill: Paula Apsell, Marion Green, Andy Stich
Foxboro: Deb Scribner
Framingham: Nancy Alpert
Gloucester: Joan Ead Keefe, Edward Howe
Jamaica Plain: Marla Kahn, Norman Lichtenstein
Lexington: Richard Averbuch, Bill Seaward, Carol Silverston
Lincoln: Mary Jo Haggerty
Lynn: Leroy Ashwood
Natick: Richard Klug, Kate Stearns
Needham: Elyse Goodman, Ken Goodman
Newton: Janet Appel, Peter Brecher, Sharon Brecher, Debbie Coogan, Peter Coogan, Larry Gillick, Helaine Golann, Corinne Hirsch, Martin Horowitz, Paul Hoxie, Barbara Kriss, Bob Read, Teri Rumpf, Terrie Savage, Stephen Wojcik
Rockport: Susan Wagner
(continued on page 6)
Brandeis Professor of English Billy Flesch posed four questions to attendees of his May Faculty Seminar, *To Kill a Mockingbird after Sixty Years*:

1) What are we today to make of Harper Lee’s late 1950s portrayal of honor and injustice, race and racism in a small Alabama town in the mid-1930s? 2) Does the 1961 Pulitzer Prize-winning novel still hold up today? 3) Does the author’s *Go Set a Watchman*, published in 2015 but written before *To Kill a Mockingbird*, add anything to the legacy of the work? And, 4) how did the writers and director of the 1962 Academy Award-winning movie version of the novel deal with the issues of race and racism? The material we examined in search of answers to these questions included the two novels, the movie, and thought-provoking articles by Casey Cep, Monroe Freedman, Aaron Sorkin, Adam Gopnik, and Malcolm Gladwell.

*To Kill a Mockingbird* is told through the fond eyes of Scout, the elementary school daughter of the novel’s protagonist, Atticus Finch. Finch, like Noah in Genesis 6:9, is a righteous man in his time, his faults unnoticed. Most seminar participants came away believing that Finch truly sought justice for his client Tom Robinson, a black man unjustly accused of raping a white woman. But by today’s standards, *To Kill a Mockingbird* does not stand up well as an indictment of racial injustice. It does, however, provide the reader with a revealing portrait of Depression era life in a small southern town as seen through the eyes of a child.

The second novel, *Go Set a Watchman*, purported to be the first draft of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, tells the story of the now grown, 26-year-old Scout, who, some 20 years after the events in *Mockingbird*, has returned from New York City to vacation in her hometown of Maycomb, Alabama. While the town has participated in the post-World War II economic growth of the country, it has changed little in its racist and sexist ways. Thanks largely to its isolated location, limited media availability, and few choices for transportation, the town has had little exposure to outside ideas. Even so, it is startling for the reader to learn that Atticus is now a member of the local Klan and believes that any changes to the existing customs and mores of the white South should come about slowly, from within the state, without any actions from the Federal Government.

*To Kill a Mockingbird*, by far the better of the two novels, is proof that a good editor is an invaluable asset for any author. Harper Lee’s editor Tay Hohoff at J.B. Lippincott & Co helped her shape the earlier novel into a story of Scout’s fond memory of a loving, understanding, and honorable father who opposed injustice.

The movie version of *Mockingbird* adds still another layer to our knowledge of Maycomb and its inhabitants, since the viewer can see the looks on people’s faces as they interact and can better imagine life in an isolated town. Yet the movie, like the book, remains a fond tribute to a father and to what was, at least for some, a cherished way of life. At the end of the class and nearly 60 years after the publication of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, I was left thinking that, the more things change in our country, the more they stay the same.

Whether in 1930s, or 1950s Maycomb, or the United States today, we tend to dig in our heels and resist when our way of life or our status in a community is challenged.
and the fear that it would become known, he felt misunderstood and victimized—by publishers, by aristocrats who didn’t pay what he was owed, by doctors who failed to help him. But his art gave him a reason to live and the will to push every envelope with courage and integrity.

Gil led us on an excursion through works in all genres, each a watershed piece. We listened to early works that bent the rules—with key modulations and unusual harmonies—but didn’t break them. This was music of its time, firmly within the Classical tradition. The emotionally expressive Piano Sonata No. 8 *(Pathétique)*, Beethoven’s first truly great sonata, presaged his middle or “heroic” period, which broke new ground in spectacular fashion, cemented his legacy, and ushered in the Romantic era.

This remarkably productive period produced major symphonies (Third, Fifth, Sixth) and piano concertos (Third, Fourth, Fifth), piano sonatas including the *Waldstein* and *Appassionata*, the *Razumovsky* string quartets, the violin concerto, the opera (*Fidelio*), and the *Mass in C*. The music asked a lot of audiences and of musicians: it was often long, difficult to perform, and packed with unusual dissonances and chromaticism. At the end of this period, Beethoven could still hear well enough to perform as a piano soloist, but it was the last time he would do so.

Beethoven’s late period produced important works that often placed demands on performers that were considered virtually impossible—the *Missa Solemnis*, the late string quartets, the late piano sonatas, and the monumental Ninth Symphony, with the choral finale that embodied Beethoven’s belief that art should express a quest for universal brotherhood. He wanted to give this message a theme that could be sung by the whole world. And indeed he did. The *Ode to Joy* is performed all over the globe as a celebration of freedom. Beethoven would be pleased.
Any doubt that BOLLI members are dedicated learners was erased this summer as near-capacity audiences filled the Gathering Space on six bright and cheery mornings to attend lectures on the decidedly murky topic of Existentialism. But the intrepid souls who forsook summertime activities to attend were rewarded with hours of stimulating lectures and discussions led by BOLLI favorite and former Study Group Leader Will Grogan, May recipient of a MA in Philosophy from Brandeis. Will came to the task well qualified, as famed Existentialist Jean Paul Sartre was the subject of his recently-completed master’s thesis.

The title for the series was inspired by Sarah Bakewell’s book, At the Existentialist Café, which provides readers with a combination of both biography and philosophy. The lectures took a similar path, with Will offering his insights into the philosophers as both human beings and thinkers. The stage for the series was set in the first lecture, with Will noting that “Existentialism is notoriously difficult to define” and often misunderstood. The mainstays of the movement (Søren Kierkegaard, Friedrich Nietzsche, Martin Heidegger, Jean-Paul Sartre, et al.), a controversial and quarrelsome bunch, were themselves often in conflict regarding Existentialism’s true meaning and the use of the label “Existentialism” altogether. In fact, philosopher Walter Kaufmann has gone so far as to state that “a bewildered outsider might well conclude that the only thing [Existential philosophers] have in common is a marked aversion for each other.”

Our explorations began with Frederick Nietzsche’s famous pronouncement “God is Dead” and the philosopher’s subsequent attempts to find value and meaning in a secular world. Nietzsche led a short and tragic life. Following his death, his reputation and standing as a philosopher were sullied by his sister’s rewriting of his work to curry favor with the Nazis. Martin Heidegger, believed by some to be the greatest 20th century philosopher, reimagined Edmund Husserl’s concept of Phenomenology, the study of how individuals experience the world, and developed the concept of Authenticity, the degree to which an individual’s actions are congruent with his or her own beliefs and desires, despite external pressures. Heidegger, who openly embraced Hitler and the Nazis, was deemed a collaborator following World War II.

The focus next turned to philosopher, novelist, and playwright Jean Paul Sartre, whose work and life are forever linked to the Existentialist movement. Born in 1905 to an upper middle-class family, his early years were marked by the death of his father. Drafted into military service as a meteorologist, Sartre was captured by German troops and served time as a prisoner of war, which enabled him to devote significant effort to the study of philosophy. Granted leave to seek care for chronic eye problems, he never returned to confinement and instead retreated to Paris, where his post-war café life became the stuff of legend. Sartre, who lived in a hotel, did much of his writing seated at his regular table at the Café de Flore, where he spent time with colleagues such as Albert Camus, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and, most importantly, his life-long partner Simone de Beauvoir. Will acknowledged de Beauvoir’s standing as “a tremendous thinker in her own right,” a worthy topic of a future lecture.

The series closed with a look at the work of philosopher and novelist Iris Murdoch, in particular her rebuke of many Existentialist teachings. Murdoch believed that society would better benefit from a philosophy that served as a moral guide that connected to a “vision of goodness and reality apart from ourselves.” Will’s final remarks were followed by thunderous applause, with many attendees remaining after the session to wish him success in pursuit of a second master’s degree, this one from the Harvard School of Divinity.
From Rosie’s Place to Brandeis

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Non-profit service work, guest speakers, and tours of local businesses and cultural institutions were part of the curriculum for all tracks. Next year, when a majority of students will come from low income and underrepresented groups, the lineup will be expanded to include two additional tracks: Racial Justice and Public Health.

In order to experience the many facets of college life fully, all Precollege students live on campus. Sue says that she, too, has come to appreciate the pleasures of the Brandeis campus, and greatly enjoys time spent at the Mandel Center, Student Center, and on early morning walks along Ring Road and its environs. Sue, a Bowdoin College graduate, lives in Roslindale with her husband, two children, and beloved 16-year-old dog Roxie. She dreams of one day starting a book group dubbed The Name Escapes Me. The origin of the name can be readily grasped by any BOLLI member who has stumbled while trying to recall the title of a favorite book.

We look forward to hearing more from Sue in the coming months as she fully develops her vision for an inclusive and comprehensive Precollege Program.

New Members!

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Swampscott: Lois Longin
Waltham: Diane Carr, Victor Carrabino, Sherry Fink, Jean Gumpert, Christen Taber, Diane Valentine, Donna VanderClock
Watertown: Amen Demerjian, Martha Demerjian, Cecilia Dunoyer, Elliot Friedman, Paula Kaplan
Wayland: Larry Dohan
Wellesley: David Gibbs, David Rattner
Weston: Sylvia Chaplain

Newcomers Steve and Bobbi Paris of Boston at the Back-to-School Brunch. (Photo by Joanne Fortunato)

It’s Not Too Late! Submit to the BOLLI Journal

Preparation of the 2020 BOLLI Journal which will be available during the spring term is very much underway, but it is not too late to contribute your work to the committee for consideration. Send your unpublished writing (fiction, creative nonfiction, memoir, poetry, or playwriting) and/or your visual art (drawing, painting, printmaking, woodworking, glasswork, pottery, mosaics, photography, or other genres). Limit is four pieces--word length for writing is 1,000 words per item; photography should be in high resolution. Please include a very brief biographical statement with your submission. Send to the editor: susanlwurster@gmail.com by September 30. We are looking forward to yet another distinctive volume of creative work by our members!
Upcoming Campus Events
Compiled by Ellen Moskowitz

**SLOSBERG MUSIC CENTER**

*Mark Berger, Viola, with Renee Rapier and Ilya Kazantsev.* Saturday, September 21, 8:00-9:30 p.m. Berger, Lydian String Quartet violist, performs music of Arvo Pärt, Elena Kats-Chernin, Dimitri Shostakovich, and others with mezzo soprano Renee Rapier and pianist Ilya Kazantsev. Tickets $20; $15 for Brandeis community and seniors (55+). Purchase online, by phone at 781-736-3400, or in person at Brandeis Tickets in the Shapiro Campus Center atrium.

*Lydian String Quartet.* Saturday, October 26, 8:00 p.m. (with pre-concert talk at 7:00 p.m.) Preview, Wednesday, October 23 at noon in Mandel Center Atrium. Brandeis University’s acclaimed quartet-in-residence performs Robert Schumann’s String Quartet No. 3, György Kurtág’s *Officium breve in memoriam Andreae Szervánsky* and Felix Mendelssohn’s String Quintet. Tickets $20; $15 for Brandeis community and seniors (55+). Mandel Center preview is free and open to the public.

**SPINGOLD THEATRE**

*Love and Information.* Friday, October 18 through Saturday, October 19 at 8:00 p.m. with matinees on Saturday, October 19 and Sunday, October 20 at 2:00 p.m. Caryl Churchill’s kaleidoscopic play of short scenes with over 100 characters addressing contemporary issues and our capacity for love. Tickets $20; $15 for Brandeis community and seniors (55+). Purchase online, by phone at 781-736-3400, or in person at Brandeis Tickets in the Shapiro Campus Center atrium.

**ROSE ART GALLERY**

*Campus Celebration: Fall Exhibitions.* Friday, September 20, 4:00-7:00 p.m. Brandeis students, faculty, and staff are invited to celebrate the opening of *Gordon Matta-Clark: Anarchitect* and *INDEX: The Meeting* before they open to the public. Free and open to the Brandeis community.

**KNIZNICK GALLERY - Women’s Studies Research Center**

*Root Shock.* Epstein Building. Daily 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. through October 10. Featuring work by Hannah Chalew, Daniela Rivera, and Corinne Spencer, this exhibition examines the concept of Cascading, or a downward spiral in women’s lives caused by the convergence of economic, environmental, and political forces. *Artist lecture and Root Shock Reception.* Wednesday, September 25, 4:00-7:00 p.m. Epstein Building. Free and open to the public.
Back to School Brunch

Once again, the BOLLI community kicked off another term with a Back-to-School Brunch of salads, bagels, quiches, and other delectables. The Gathering Space seemed more full than ever as members gathered to reconnect with friends and to welcome those joining us for the first time. Before leaving, members also had a chance to visit with the leaders of BOLLI’s various Special Interest Groups to consider joining their activities. Many thanks to Fran Feldman and Susan Schmidt for giving so generously of their time to make this event happen!

Sharing summer notes (from left): Mimi Dohan & Judith Sharenow; Joyce Lazarus, Nancy Alimansky, & Susan Erdos; Peter Schmidt & Harris Traiger. (Photos by Sue Wurster and Carole Grossman)

Introducing family, making new acquaintances, trading stories: Larry & Elaine Dohan; Leroy Ashwood & Bob Read; Dennis Greene & Ann Ross. (Photos by Sue Wurster, Sandy Miller-Jacobs, and Joanne Fortunato.)

With Study Group Leaders: Fran Goldberg & Sue Wurster; Sandy Miller-Jacobs & Bonnie Seider; Laurel Brody (Photos by Harris Traiger, Joanne Fortunato, and Harris Traiger again.)
Getting ready for a new term: Megan Curtis & Beth Mazer; Liz David, Marilyn Brooks, & Quinn Rosefsky; Steve Asen & Lloyd David. (Photos by Sue Wurster, Harris Traiger, and Joanne Fortunato.)

Looking forward to another stimulating semester: Bill Hollman & George Model; Betty Brudnick & Linda Braun; Tamara Chernow. (Photos by Harris Traiger and Joanne Fortunato.)

Renewing friendship, enjoying the scene, discovering common interests: Marjorie Roemer & Joyce Hollman; David Moskowitz; Stan Morse & Becky Meyers. (Photos by Joanne Fortunato and Harris Traiger.)

And at the end: Photo Group leader Joanne Fortunato; Miriam Goldman, Liz Lieberman, Bernice Rose, & Ricky Ezrin; organizers Fran Feldman & Susan Schmidt. (Photos by Harris Traiger and Joanne Fortunato.)