



Newsletter

AT BERKSHIRE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

WINTER 2010

PARTNERS WITH WILLIAMS COLLEGE, BARD COLLEGE AT SIMON'S ROCK & MASSACHUSETTS COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS

Exciting Winter 2010 Semester

The Curriculum Committee has done it again! To start off an exciting year, 11 new courses will be offered in Great Barrington and Lenox from January 19 through March 3, 2010. Classes will be held Tuesdays through Fridays. Please see the Winter 2010 catalog or visit our website at www.BerkshireOLLI.org for complete details.

TUESDAY

**Triplex Cinema and
Bard College at Simon's Rock, Great Barrington**

Tuesdays at the Movies: Senior Moments in Film – Howard Arkans
Greek Tragedy – Christopher Callanan
Traveling With a Photographic Eye – John Lipkowitz

WEDNESDAY

Lenox Library, Lenox

Digital Photography Made Easy – Steve Blanchard, Arthur Gordon, Jill Jillson, Sharon Lips, Cesar Silva
European Art History – Jerome Connoy
Poetry: A Guide to Self-Expression – Carol Stroll

THURSDAY

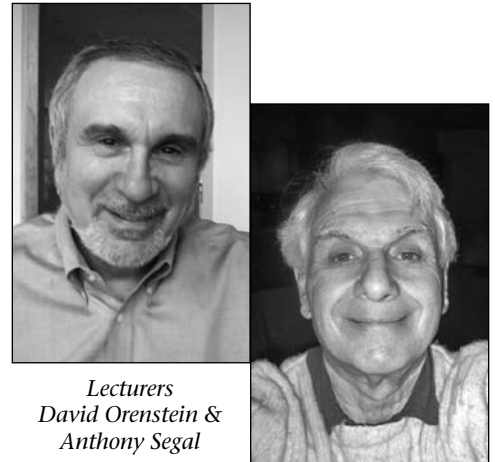
Lenox Library, Lenox

Adventures in Short Fiction – Ronald Giancola
Great Ideas of Psychology – Jerome Connoy

FRIDAY

Lenox Library, Lenox

Today's Headlines – David Orenstein
Understanding the Brain – Anthony Segal
Science Conversations: Behind the Headlines – Panel



Lecturers
David Orenstein &
Anthony Segal

The Clark Art Series

Michael Cassin, the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute's curator of education, will offer a lecture series entitled "Books into Art." The dates are as follows:

- March 4** – Homer's *Iliad* and *The Odyssey*
- March 11** – The Hebrew Bible
- March 18** – Virgil's *Aeneid* and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*
- March 25** – The Christian Gospels

OLLI Photo Contest

PRIZE: The winning photos will be on the cover of the Spring or Summer 2010 Catalog, and the winners receive a 1-year free membership to OLLI.

THEME: Berkshire area spring or summer scene

SPECS: Digital format (jpeg, tiff, bmp), 3.2 mega-pixels or greater

DEADLINE: January 5, 2010

SUBMIT: E-mail attached photos to Bob.Desrosiers@Gmail.com
Visit www.BerkshireOLLI.org for further details.

Photo Contest Winner – Winter

Jennifer Ressler, a member of the Berkshire Museum Camera Club, submitted the winning photo "Icy Stream" which appears on the cover of the Winter 2010 Catalog. A new arrival to the Berkshires, she took the photo at the bottom of Mt. Greylock in Lanesboro with a Nikon D60 at 1/20 sec., ISO 200, F22.

President's Message

This year is really going by fast for OLLI. It seems as if the summer just ended and already we've finished the fall semester and are gearing up for the winter.

Barbara Hochberg and I recently attended the National OLLI Conference in Park City, Utah. We received a surprise when the Osher Foundation announced it would give \$25,000 to every OLLI (120 across the country) to help in this poor financial climate. What a great gift!

Barbara and I made a presentation describing our programs and our Educational and Cultural Partners at a breakout session. Afterward, many in the audience complimented us on our programs. Reflecting on this, it became obvious that lots of people are responsible for our success. There is not enough room in this article to mention everyone, but I can name a few.

- IT Chairman Bob Desrosiers and his team work hard to ensure the videoconferencing, recording for community cable, PowerPoint presentations for meetings and slides for advertising in theaters are accurate and professional.

- Our Catalog Committee, headed by Bonnie Desrosiers, continues to present an outstanding publication every semester. We were told that our catalog circulates proudly around the Osher office in San Francisco.

- Sandi Rubin, Editor of the OLLI Newsletter, with the help of her editorial staff, produces a fine publication as well. Sandi does double duty also serving as Secretary of the Board.

- The Special Events Committee chaired by Arline Breskin and the Distinguished Speaker Series program co-chaired by Lora and Sig Tobias work to make our OLLI unique. These programs have been exciting and informative.

- Norman Michaels, the Treasurer and chair of the Finance Committee, works diligently with BCC to budget and maintain OLLI's fiscal integrity.

- OLLI's Membership Committee has done a fabulous job under the leadership of Marilyn Brimberg. Our membership drives have been successful, and we have nearly reached our goal of 1,000 members due to their innovative activities.

In addition, other committee chairs, Board members, course facilitators and instructors and OLLI's outstanding Executive Director all contribute to making our organization grow. But we need more volunteers to help continue to expand OLLI. We need your help, your ideas and your time. Please get involved!

— Howard Arkans

OLLI Goes Green

In order to save both paper and postage, OLLI will send all flyers for both Special Events and Distinguished Speakers via email. These flyers will be in the body of the email as well as attached for easy printing. You will also be able to find all flyers on our website at www.BerkshireOLLI.org. Those members who do not have email will receive their flyers by postal mail. All catalogs and newsletters will continue to be sent by postal mail.

If you have not given OLLI your email address, please do so now by either emailing the office olli@berkshirecc.edu or calling 413.236.2190. All email addresses are on the "OLLI Business ONLY" list. We do not share our members' email addresses with any other organization. — Sharon Mack, Staff Assistant

OLLI National Conference 2009

Howard Arkans, President of the OLLI at BCC Board of Directors, and I attended *Building a Community of Learners: Osher Lifelong Learning Institute 6th National Conference* in Park City, Utah, from October 12 to 14. The program was an extremely valuable opportunity for Osher Institute leaders from around the country—both staff and volunteer—to engage in lively discussions and to share ideas on how to manage, develop and expand an Osher Institute program.

Over 240 OLLI leaders met with each other and with representatives of The Bernard Osher Foundation and the OLLI National Resource Center to explore concrete ways to approach the challenges facing the 120 OLLIs across the nation. OLLI at BCC was honored to be asked to present one of the conference workshops, "Partnering For Growth: OLLI and Your Community," in conjunction with the OLLI at the University of Denver. We discussed our Educational and Cultural Partners programs. More than 50 attendees enrolled in the workshop which was received very favorably. Responses to the presentation demonstrated how fortunate we are in the Berkshires to have such strong support for our program from the academic and arts communities.

Dynamic speakers presented valuable information on the best practices in many areas including volunteer leadership development, the role of strategic planning, encouraging new members and cultivating individual giving to OLLIs. Howard and I returned from the conference energized and eager to put new ideas into action.

—Barbara Hochberg
Executive Director

OLLI NEWSLETTER

Editor: Sandra Rubin • Associate Editor: Marilyn Margolis • Assistant Editors: Peri Caverly, Marge Lewis
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Getting to Know Sandi Rubin

What do Berkshire County and Jerusalem have in common? Our beautiful county and the international city both have had Sandi Rubin working for them. Here in Berkshire County, Sandi holds several OLLI positions and has volunteered at the Hinsdale Library; for Jerusalem, Sandi served as the United States Executive Director of the Jerusalem Foundation.

The Foundation is an international, interdenominational organization with the goal of raising funds and enhancing the quality of life for all the neighborhoods in that city. The Foundation was begun by Teddy Kollek, the former mayor of Jerusalem, and Sandi feels privileged to have worked with him for sixteen years. The organization has raised hundreds of millions of dollars and has been responsible for such amenities as a symphony hall, a zoo, over 350 parks and gardens, archeological preservation and restoration projects,

twenty-three community centers, numerous schools, libraries, museums, hospices, senior citizen centers and more. She retired from the Jerusalem Foundation six years ago.

Before joining the Jerusalem Foundation, Sandi earned a Master's degree in Education as a Reading Specialist, and another in Not-for-Profit Management as a Policy Analyst. She taught at Rockland Community College and then worked as a Legislative Aide to a State Senator in New York dividing her time between Rockland County and Albany.

After moving to the Berkshires from her home in New York City three years ago, Sandi became involved with OLLI. At OLLI, Sandi is the Editor of this newsletter, Secretary of the Board



of Directors and a member of the Governance Committee. In addition, Sandi takes multiple OLLI courses, plays bridge and is a member of a book group.

During her years with the Foundation, she traveled to Jerusalem on business at least three times a year. Now, she and her husband

Alan travel for fun. They recently toured Greece, Morocco and southern Africa and plan on spending the month of March 2010 in Spain. They have a son Josh, who lives with his wife and daughter in Brooklyn, and a daughter Jennifer, who lives with her husband and two children in Madison, Wisconsin.

We are indeed lucky to have Sandi volunteering for OLLI.

— Marilyn Margolis, Associate Editor

A Very Special Event

On October 11, a beautiful sunny Sunday, over 85 OLLI members and guests enjoyed a wonderful day which began with brunch at BCC prepared by OLLI's gourmet chefs (Barbara Barron, Larry Klein and Ron Maitland). Julianne Boyd, Artistic Director of Barrington Stage Company, was the guest speaker who shared her insights about *The Fantasticks* and her company.

Then the group went to the performance of *The Fantasticks* at Barrington Stage. After the show, Julianne introduced Tom Jones, the lyricist for the show, who delighted the OLLI audience with personal stories about himself and the show's history. He welcomed questions from the audience.

A very heartfelt thank you goes to Arline Breskin, Chair, Carol Sabot, Co-Chair, and the Special Events Committee members who planned and executed this memorable event for us.

This, indeed, was a very "Special Event."

— Wilma Michaels, Editorial Staff

Top photo: Julianne Boyd



Bottom photo: Chefs Larry Klein, Carol Sabot, Ron Maitland, Barbara Barron and Chef-in-Chief Arline Breskin

Mum Bett: The Elizabeth Freeman Story

Mum Bett, known to us as Elizabeth Freeman, was born into slavery circa 1734 in Claverack, NY. As a youngster, she was sold (perhaps given) to Colonel John Ashley in Sheffield, MA, where she remained as a slave for about thirty years. Mum Bett is known as the first emancipated woman slave in Massachusetts. Her story is remarkable because she initiated the trial that led to her freedom.

Col. Ashley was a kind gentleman, but his wife Hannah is recalled as "...the most despotic of mistresses." In 1780 in a rage against Bett's sister Lizzie, also a slave, Hannah raised a hot kitchen shovel and started to strike her. The story goes that Bett intervened, received the blow herself and was severely burned—she never regained full use of her arm and the scar never faded. Not long after this injury, Bett left the house saying she'd never return. Col. Ashley appealed to the court to force her return.

Mum Bett then began her fight for freedom. There are several versions of her story but all include her overhearing discussions of the Declaration of Independence and the new Massachusetts Constitution asserting that "All men are born free and equal..." She could not read or write, but her listening and thinking powers were acute. She thought about people being born free and equal and resolved to learn "whether she did not come in among them."

She walked to Theodore Sedgwick's Stockbridge law office to seek his support to defend her plea for freedom. Sedgwick, a known abolitionist, accepted her case and also included a male slave Brom as a party to the suit. The test case Brom and Bett v. Ashley was tried in Great Barrington in 1781. The jury decided that Bett and Brom were not the legal servants and property of John Ashley and should be freed. They were awarded 30 shillings

in damages and Ashley was assessed for court costs. The Massachusetts Historical Society credits her case for setting a precedent that helped lead to the abolition of slavery in Massachusetts during the 1780s.

Upon being freed, she changed her name to Elizabeth Freeman and worked as a paid domestic at the Sedgwick home where she became a valued, trusted family friend. Eventually, she saved money to buy her own home where she lived with her children and grandchildren; her husband had been killed in the Revolutionary War. After her death in 1829, she was buried in the Sedgwick plot in the Stockbridge cemetery—the only black and non-Sedgwick buried there. Written on her tombstone: "...In every situation of domestic trial, she was the most efficient helper, and the tenderest friend. Good mother farewell."

Her memory and spirit have lived on in the naming of the Elizabeth Freeman Center in Pittsfield for victims of domestic abuse.

—Joanna Fribush, Editorial Staff

Return Service Requested

