AT BERKSHIRE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

FALL 2016

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

Cornucopia of Fall Courses

The fall semester runs from September 12 through October 27. The Curriculum Council has put together an eclectic array of exciting courses and lecturers.

Classes will be held at the following locations:

AR = Arrowhead House, Pittsfield

CONTE = Conte Federal Building, Pittsfield

KF = Kimball Farms, Lenox

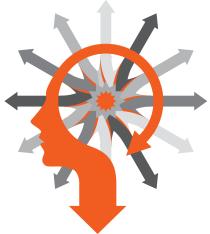
SCC = BCC South County Campus, Great Barrington

SR = Simon's Rock College, Great Barrington

WC = Williams College, Williamstown

WH = Whitney Center for the Arts, Pittsfield

SP = Spirited in Lenox



Today's Front Page – Berkshire Eagle Staff – WH

Mary Shelley's Frankenstein - Nancy Travis - CONTE

What is a Text? - David Greetham - CONTE

Melville: 19th Century Poet Exemplar - Peter Bergman - AR

Legends of the Bench and Bar – John Pollok – SR

Shakespeare's Sonnets - Nancy Walters - SCC

Venice: City of History and Mystery - Celia Macheski - SCC



The Role of Law in American Democracy – Phil McKnight – WC

Advances in Science - Robert Savage, Allison Pacelli - WC

Another Side of the Berkshires – Susan Kelly – various locations

Art and Life - Creativity as a Spiritual Resource - M. Schorr - CONTE



Plato's Republic - Bill Cameron - KF

Writing Your Story: An Introduction to Memoir - Vivian Dorsel - KF

Portrait of a Lady by Henry James - Elizabeth Young - KF

Creative Nonfiction Workshop - Steven Rubin - KF

Showcasing the Berkshires - KF

Architectural Gems – various presenters and locations

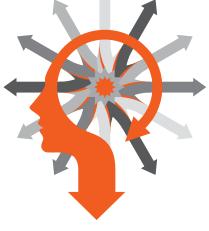
Fracking: Why So Controversial? - Klein, Bergman, Khan,

McKnight - WH

Today's Headlines - Cotter - WH

History of Comedy, Part 1 - Phil Halpern - WH

Lift Your Spirits - Jim Nejaime - SP



Call for Photos of Winter in the **Berkshires**

OLLI invites photographers to submit photos of winter in the Berkshires for our catalog cover. Images should be color, high-resolution JPGs or TIFFs (at least 3 MB) and horizontally oriented. The winning photo will be featured on the cover of the Winter 2017 OLLI Catalog and will receive a free one-year OLLI membership. Please email submissions to olli@berkshirecc. edu by September 23, 2016.

Fall 2016 Photo **Contest Winner**

Christy Butler of Cheshire won the fall photo contest. His photo of Cheshire Lake appears on the cover of the Fall 2016 OLLI Catalog. Congratulations Christy!

President's Message

In pursuit of our primary goal of increased membership, we held an open house at Shakespeare and Company in Lenox on April 5. The gathering highlighted the upcoming Spring semester as well as the many benefits of OLLI membership, and it produced 30 new OLLI members. Thanks to the Membership Committee for their hard work in producing the event and to our OLLI instructors for their informed presentations. As of this writing, our membership count stands at 1,080.

Our spring and summer semester classes have concluded. I'm pleased to report that both enrollment and attendance increased over prior years. My heartfelt thanks go out to our extraordinary faculty for their dedication as well as to those members who attended.

Our Annual Meeting was held

at the Mahaiwe Theater on May 27. The following Mona Sherman Memorial Lecture featured Joe Klein, noted political journalist. The Lecture was sold out with nearly 700 in attendance. Thanks to the Sherman family, Berkshire Eagle and Berkshire Gas for their sponsorship and to Bob Desrosiers for his technical support.

On June 10, OLLI held the Faculty Appreciation Reception at Ventfort Hall in Lenox. Attended by over 150 faculty and OLLI members, the event gave us an opportunity to say thank you to our generous and dedicated volunteer faculty. Thanks to Adele Cukor and family and assistant chefs for their culinary excellence.

The third OLLI Leadership Academy just concluded. The 12 volunteer participants were introduced to the history, structure, working mechanics and goals of our OLLI organization. We hope this Academy will catalyze volunteer participation and greater

committee activity as well as develop future leadership.

Upcoming, look for an Open House reception previewing the fall semester to be held at BCC on Wednesday, August 24, from 1:30pm to 3pm, followed by a Distinguished Speakers lecture. On Saturday, September 3rd, we will hold our annual Art Show and Silent Auction in Lenox. Several trips and special events are scheduled during the summer and fall. We are also initiating a new series of Shared Interest Groups, and you will hear more about this in the future.

OLLI courses, events, trips, and lectures are all created, organized, and implemented by our outstanding volunteers, and we are very grateful for their efforts. If you are interested in joining a committee or in teaching a class on a favorite subject, kindly call our Executive Director, Megan Whilden, at (413) 236-2192 for further information. — Lenny Tabs

Meet an OLLI Board Member: Maxine Bookless

Maxine Bookless, membership committee co-chair, is an OLLI rarity: a Pittsfield native. She grew up on the West side surrounded by family; her grandparents lived next door, and her uncle and aunt lived upstairs. Maxine's ambition was to be an artist, and she was accepted to the Massachusetts College of Art. But there were no dorms, and she reports that "nice girls did not live in apartments at seventeen." The mother-approved fallback was teaching. Although she was a good teacher, Maxine soon realized that she simply did not enjoy it.

After spending a year in Israel and one in Milan, Maxine settled in Boston, studying construction and engineering at the Boston Architectural Center. For a decade she held a variety of jobs in the housing industry. Maxine then found her métier when she started working with elders. Even as a child in the old neighborhood, she had felt a connection to older people.

Later she realized that this was "the thread woven throughout my career." Ultimately she became executive director of the Golda Meir House of Jewish Community Housing for the Elderly in Boston.

Although she loved her job, Maxine decided to retire in 2013 while she was still "healthy and upright." She moved back to the Berkshires the following year and did volunteer work and took courses. Soon, however, she was looking for a way to give back to the community and make a difference. OLLI provided the opportunity. After taking an OLLI course on Pittsfield's historic buildings, she served on the Pittsfield Historical Commission and was tapped by Megan Whilden for OLLI's leadership academy. Today, Maxine serves on the Age Friendly Berkshires task force, as well as on the OLLI board. She has also been able to return to her first love, art, by taking art courses and working in collage.



Maxine finds it interesting that when she became free to go anywhere in the world, she returned to the Berkshires. "I guess I needed a sense of place," she says. "I came home."

— Judy Katz

New OLLI Program – Shared Interest Groups

OLLI at BCC is offering a new and exciting way for its members to participate with others in pursuing their interests and ideas. Emulating the success of other OLLIs across the country, Berkshire OLLI this September will launch eleven new Shared Interest Groups (SIGs). The groups will bring together those OLLI members who wish to explore a favorite topic in an atmosphere of small-group learning, participation, and self-directed informality.

Carl Shuster, chairperson of OLLI's New Initiatives Committee, recently announced this new way to serve the diverse interests of OLLI members. Shuster explained that the impetus for these new offerings came from OLLI focus groups held several years ago. The OLLI Strategic Plan (adopted in December, 2015) also called for finding and implementing ways to supplement OLLI's traditional classroom lecture approach to learning, and the recent Leadership Academies also enthusiastically embraced the specific idea of small, self-led learning groups.

According to Shuster, "the exciting thing about SIGS is that OLLI members will determine their own way of pursuing a self-identified topic.

They can participate fully—when, where, and how often they choose to meet—and there is no cost."

To start a shared interest group, at least four OLLI members need to participate, and a volunteer facilitator must be willing to organize the SIG. Any OLLI member wishing to propose a new SIG can submit a proposal on a form available at the OLLI office or at BerkshireOLLI.org. Members wishing to participate in one or more of the newly proposed SIGs should contact the named facilitator directly (see colored insert).

Catharine Maria Sedgwick

OUR FIRST BERKSHIRE NOVELIST

Catharine Maria Sedgwick was the first person born in the Berkshires to publish a novel. Her first book, *A New-England Tale*, (1822) became a bestseller on both sides of the Atlantic. Her later books were also popular. Born in Stockbridge in 1789, the daughter of Pamela and Theodore Sedgwick of Stockbridge fame, Catharine lived most of her life in Stockbridge and Lenox, but also experienced European travel and life in New York.

Catharine had close relationships with her father and brothers, but had little nurturing from her mother, who suffered from frequent debilitating bouts of depression. Her nanny was Mumbet, the black slave famously freed by the legal efforts of Catharine's father.

Sedgwick was one of the earliest authors to write about New England life in fiction. She believed writing to be a morally useful activity and the responsibility of a lady "in possession of leisure" was to improve society. Literary notables Nathaniel Hawthorne, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Fanny Kemble and William Cullen Bryant recognized her work and met frequently in her home as friends.

Hawthorne credited her as "our most truthful novelist" and Bryant praised "her skill in the drawing of characters."

A Unitarian convert, Catharine had a distaste for Calvinism, the dominant theology in New England. Because *A New-England Tale* exposed these views, Catharine pub-

lished it anonymously. She said she "could not endure the idea that I had written myself out of the affections of my own [Stockbridge] people." Her subsequent novel *Hope Leslie* (1827) advocates interracial friendships and considers interracial marriage.

Women are central characters in Sedgwick's novels. She portrays their responsibilities for domestic life, but also confronts them with volatile issues like abolition, religious freedom and prison reform. She also questioned the value of marriage. In a letter to her niece she wrote that "... many have made a shipwreck of happiness in marriage or found it a



joyless condition where affection had died of starvation." Sedgwick never married, although she had many suitors.

Sedgwick became president of the Women's Prison Association of New York, an organization that still exists. To revive interest in her work, the Catharine Maria Sedgwick Society was formed in 1997, and it reports that her novels are now included in anthologies for college-level study. The next meeting of this society will be in Stockbridge in 2017.

Catharine died in 1867 and is buried in the "Sedgwick Pie" portion of the Stockbridge Cemetery.

- Joanna Fribush

Nancy Travis

SHARING A LOVE OF LITERATURE

OLLI members who've enjoyed literature classes with Nancy Travis can rejoice! Nancy will be teaching *Frankenstein* in the fall of 2016. For the past several years, she has taught masterpieces including *Paradise Lost, Middlemarch,* and *Absalom, Absalom.* Why these classics? Nancy selects titles that many of us recognize but haven't read and are well worth reading.

Nancy has always wanted to share her love of literature. She grew up in Cheshire, Connecticut and attended Smith College, then pursued a master's degree at Johns Hopkins University in English and education. Nancy taught English in Lexington, Massachusetts. When her husband's job brought them to the Berkshires in 1975, Nancy's career took an unanticipated and serendipitous

turn. She began teaching in 1976 as a part-time instructor at Berkshire Community College and took on a full-time position in 1988. Nancy taught in the English Department and eventually became the department head until she retired 4 ½ years ago.

Nancy speaks enthusiastically about the rewards of teaching at a community college. It enabled her to be engaged with students at the start of their adult lives, as well as students

beginning to experience a new start in their educational lives. She had the opportunity to teach introductory courses on a variety of topics in literature and English composition. Teaching at BCC also allowed her to pursue her lifelong desire to teach, whereas at a 4-year institution the

emphasis might have been on research and scholarship.

Nancy said that the pleasures of teaching at OLLI are different but no less rewarding. OLLI members have the benefit of life experience and education, and are engaged and responsive. There's no need for the instructor to create enthusiasm – the class members bring it with them.

When she's not involved in education, Nancy enjoys nature in the Berk-

shires by biking and kayaking. She enjoys reading and crosswords. Her husband is also a retired educator. They have two grown sons and two grandchildren, ages 4 and 8.

— Linda Halpern



Philip McKnight

ENVIRONMENTAL LAW SCHOLAR

A veteran OLLI instructor, Philip McKnight loves both the law and salt water sailing. He also has a deep commitment to the environment, to the town of Williamstown and to Williams College.

Philip attended The Hotchkiss School in Connecticut and then spent a year abroad at the International School in Geneva, Switzerland. He attended Williams College and then the University of Chicago Law School. Philip first worked at a law firm in New York City but after a few years moved to a new firm in Greenwich, CT. In 1994, he changed careers and became an administrator at The Hotchkiss School. Now a resident of Williamstown, Philip has for many years taught environmental law and environmental history to undergraduates as an adjunct faculty member at Williams College and at the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts.

A veteran OLLI instructor, Philip has offered 8 previous classes. He will again offer *The Role of the Law in American*

Democracy during the coming fall term in Williamstown. This course argues that during times of crisis from the earliest days of the republic, the law has nurtured and sustained the democratic institutions at the heart of our country. The course will also examine how these legal events were influenced

by political, social and economic forces, and by politicians, judges, lawyers, legislators and citizens. Philip has also taught *Shakespeare and the Law* and *United States Environmental Law: Its Historic Past, Its Uncertain Future*, three times each.

Philip and his wife Kathy were married in 1968. They have one daughter, Sarah, who lives in Connecticut with their three "magnificent grandchildren." Outside the law, Philip's chief interest is in salt water sailboat racing. He has logged over 25,000 miles at sea, and has participated in the Bermuda race more than a dozen times. Phil and Kathy also hike in the



mountains, and they have traversed, among other trails, the challenging Presidential Range in New Hampshire.

Philip has a strong connection to Williams College. He is an alumnus, as are his father and daughter. He is also committed to the Williamstown com-

munity and is a former chair of the Williamstown Conservation Commission, which tries to accommodate development in a way that protects resource areas like rivers and streams. Philip is also the current President of the Williamstown Rural Lands Foundation, a land trust which protects open lands using conservation and agricultural preservation restrictions. Currently this foundation is helping to develop a circular trail around Williamstown that includes Mount Greylock, the Hopkins Forest and Pine Cobble. — Peter Bluhm

Record Attendance for Annual Meeting and Lecture

The OLLI annual meeting was held at the Mahaiwe on May 27. Lenny Tabs, President of OLLI's Board of Directors, introduced Ellen Kennedy, President of Berkshire Community College. She thanked OLLI for its annual financial contribution to BCC, which is used to buy gift books for BCC students. She also commented on the mutually beneficial relationship between BCC and OLLI.

President Tabs reported that OLLI now has 1,057 members, an increase from 976 at this time last year. After thanking the faculty, members and staff, he commended the volunteers who worked on producing the classes, special events, distinguished speakers, printed materials and all the other activities that make OLLI such a special organization. He reported that our Leadership Training Academy and the Strategic Plan have given us new leaders and a roadmap for the next few years. Looking ahead, he reported on a new OLLI website to provide better communication with our members. and new non-tuition initiatives including "OLLI University Day" and "Shared Interest Groups" (SIGs). Mr. Tabs then reported that endowment is down, but with new investment managers and the cooperation of the market, OLLI hopes to recoup its

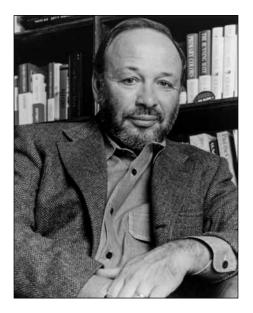
Members then unanimously voted to re-elect three people to the board – Tom Koelle, Lois Lenehan and Lenny Tabs – and to elect two new members —Chelly Sterman and Joe Gerard. President Tabs thanked four outgoing board members—Bob Desrosiers, Shirley Shapiro, Hal Shair and Bill Latimer—for their hard work.

Megan Whilden, celebrating her second anniversary as Executive Director of OLLI, commented that OLLI members are over 1,000 of the smartest, most interesting and engaged people in the Berkshires. She listed the many member-organized activities coming up in June, after which the meeting was adjourned.

As has been customary, the Annual

Meeting was followed by the Mona Sherman Memorial Lecture. Mona was past president of OLLI, and together with her husband, Art Sherman, was responsible for the organization's transition from the Berkshire Lifelong Learning Institute (BILL) to OLLI. This year's speaker was Joe Klein, the award-winning columnist and author of seven books, including *Primary Colors* which was about the 1992 presidential race.

In Mr. Klein's talk, "How on Earth Did We Get Here: The Chaotic Politics of 2016," he maintained that the country is at a crossroads and the future of democracy at stake. He said that Donald Trump represents a danger to America and that his policies could lead to a major depression. Although he considers himself a "radical moderate," Mr. Klein paid compliments to Hillary Clinton who, he said, does her homework, knows the issues and can comprehend the complexities of government. He also observed that Republicans seem interested in lifting restrictions on



economic systems through deregulation and that Democrats seem interested in lifting restrictions on people's rights, particularly for gays, Latinos and women. A record number of nearly 700 people crammed into the Mahaiwe to enjoy this truly stimulating talk.

— Sandi Rubin.

Art Show and Silent Auction over Labor Day Weekend in Lenox

Each year we celebrate the creative talents of our 1,000+ members by mounting a weekend show of their art works. This year the event will be held at a new location: Lenox's historic town hall. The artwork on display will range from watercolors to sculpture, from paintings to mixed media and photography.

A reception and silent auction will be held Saturday, September 3, from 2pm to 5pm, and is free and open to the public. Silent auction items include gift certificates from the Red Lion Inn, Firefly, Alta Wine Bar, Chez Nous, Loft 48, Karen Allen Fiber Arts and much more, and all proceeds benefit OLLI's educational programs. The art show will also be open Sunday, September 4, from 10am to 2pm. OLLI's Art Show and Silent Auction Committees, led by Tom and Rosanne Koelle, have organized a wonderful weekend of art and fun, and we look forward to seeing you there.

Square Dancing Classes Return

OLLI will again offer an Introduction to Western Square Dancing course on Tuesdays this fall. The course will run from September 27 to October 25 and will meet from 7:00-8:30pm; at the South Congregational Church, Pittsfield. For more information, visit BerkshireOLLI.org.

Thank You OLLI Donors

OLLI at BCC thrives because of the generosity of its members and supporters. Thank you to all who those listed below who donated to OLLI during the last fiscal year, July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016. Your support is appreciated.

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^{*} Deceased

OLLI Faculty Feted at Ventfort Hall

Over 150 OLLI instructors, members and guests gathered together on June 10 at Ventfort Hall in Lenox to celebrate and thank OLLI faculty for their generosity in volunteering their time and sharing their insights. The Faculty Appreciation committee, headed by Adele Cukor, did an outstanding job creating a lovely and welcoming event.

Three instructors were especially recognized: Howard Arkans, who leads popular film and culinary courses; James Kraft, who has taken us on a journey through American literature over many semesters; and Stacey Wallach, one of OLLI's favorite history teachers. Together, these three instructors have offered over fifty OLLI classes.



Clockwise from above: Andy Fisher with Stacy Wallach; John Wendling with Bill Cameron; President Lenny Tabs with Special Event Committee Chair Arline Breskin; Joel and Phyllis Curran with Alice Schiller; OLLI members and guests dig in at the generously provided food table.





OLLI NEWSLETTER: Editor: Peter Bluhm. Feature Writer: Joanna Fribush. Photo Editor: Joanne Rosier. Assistant Editors: Linda Halpern, Judy Katz, Don Miller, Sandi Rubin, Myrna Schneiderman, Rose Scotch, Ruth Weinstein. Proofreaders: Magda Gabor-Hotchkiss, Marie Milazzo, Harriet Shair.



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Successful First Year of OLLI's Mentoring



Above: OLLI Mentee-Mentor pairs: Gladys Garcia-Rijos with Peter Bluhm; Cheryl Bassett with Judy Levin; Lynda Laporte with Alison Atlas; Joyce Hovey with Emily Rudd.

Right: Mentoring program managers (left to right) Claudia Shuster (OLLI co-chair), Megan Whilden, Kari Dupuis (BCC) and Carole Siegel (OLLI co-chair).

