



Newsletter

AT BERKSHIRE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

WINTER 2011

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

Exciting Winter 2011 Semester

The Curriculum Committee continues to present stimulating and exciting courses. Ten courses will be offered at the Lenox Library, the Triplex Cinema in Great Barrington and Berkshire Community College in Pittsfield from Tuesday, January 18 through Friday, February 25. Please see the Winter 2011 catalog for more information or visit our website at www.BerkshireOLLI.org.

TUESDAY Triplex Cinema, Great Barrington & BCC, Pittsfield

Tuesdays at the Movies: Grace Kelly – Howard Arkans
Basic Ballroom Dancing: Rumba – Sal Angelo **LOTTERY (Limited to 6 couples)**

WEDNESDAY Lenox Library

The Enduring Epic of Beowulf – Alexandra Tinari
European Art History – Jerome Connoy, Moderator
**Adventures in Short Fiction* – Ronald Giancola

THURSDAY Lenox Library

Realms of Gold: 250 Years of British Poetry – John Toffey
Great Ideas of Psychology – Jerome Connoy, Moderator

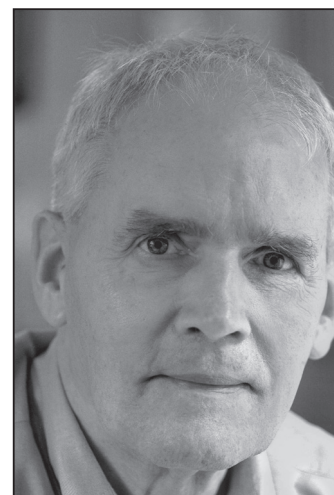
FRIDAY Lenox Library

Today's Headlines – David Orenstein, Moderator
All the Physics You Wonder About – George Haus
Science Conversations: Behind the Headlines – Panel

*Begins January 12.



Lecturers
Alexandra Tinari & John Toffey



OLLI Photo Contest

PRIZE: The winning photos will be on the cover of the Spring or the Summer 2011 catalog, and the winner will 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 7, 2011

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

Photo Contest Winner – Winter

Elaine Radiss of Great Barrington submitted the winning photo taken at Stoneybrook Farm, Monument Valley Road, Great Barrington, which appears on the cover of the Winter 2011 Catalog. She took the photo with a Canon EOS 30D camera with a 50 mm lens at 1/60 sec, F/11, ISO 200.

President's Message

OLLI had a terrific Fall semester—the best in my memory. Eclectic courses, fully subscribed, were outstanding. After a dubious start, videoconferencing from The Clark to BCC South County worked well. Real time questions and answers after the lectures proved that technology of this sort works. It will be difficult to top this semester, but I know our Curriculum Council members will continue to maintain high course quality.

It is important for us to hear from you about our courses so please fill out the evaluation form. It is a simple procedure. Just go to our website at www.BerkshireOLLI.org, then go to the Menu on the left side of the home page. You will see the link to the evaluation form. Fill out the form and click the Submit box. Your input will be extremely valuable to our committees as they plan future courses. If there are any topics you would like the committees to consider, please let us know.

Special Events continued to shine. In October, the day at Barrington Stage was stellar. Over 125 people attended a great brunch during which Paul Flaum offered a fascinating preview of *The Crucible*. This was followed by an outstanding production of that play.

The monthly Distinguished Speaker Series continued in October. It was highlighted by the always interesting, if controversial, Alan Chartock who “handicapped” the elections.

Now we look forward to the Winter semester. Because many of our members flee to warmer weather, our Winter semester is smaller in course number but not in quality. Hardy OLLI members who remain in our beloved Berkshires can warm up at the Triplex on Tuesday mornings and enjoy “Tuesday at the Movies.” They can also keep moving with the Basic Ballroom Dancing course. Many intellectually stimulating courses are also offered. So sign up and enjoy winter in the Berkshires with OLLI.

As in every organization run by volunteers, we can use your help. If you are interested in planning courses, working with Special Events, the Distinguished Speakers Series or have a talent that you feel we could use, please be a part of our team. Contact us!



Looking for Holiday Gifts?

An OLLI at BCC membership is the PERFECT gift for the intellectually curious mature adult.

Membership will provide access to classes, lectures and special events – a year of camaraderie and learning!

Beautiful Gift Certificates announcing your gift are available.

Call the OLLI office at 413.236.2190 for further information.

**Best Wishes for a Happy
and Healthy New Year**

The Clark Art Series

At various periods in the history of European and American Art there have been remarkable outpourings of energy and creativity in different locations.

During the 15th century, the city of Florence produced or attracted many great artists of the time. In the 17th century, Amsterdam was home to what has been called “The Golden Age of Dutch Art.” As we know so from The Clark’s permanent collection, Paris was central to the development of the visual arts in the 19th century. By the 20th century, after the Armory Show of 1913, New York too became a “capital” of art.

This series of lectures will examine the work of artists based in each of these cities in turn, exploring the paintings and sculpture produced in their historical contexts.

OLLI members may register separately for individual sessions or sign up in advance for all four. The sessions are on Thursdays from 1:00 to 2:30 p.m.

March 3 – Capitals of Art 1: Florence in the 15th Century

March 10 – Capitals of Art 2: Amsterdam in the 17th Century

March 17 – Capitals of Art 3: Paris in the 19th Century

March 24 – Capitals of Art 4: New York in the 20th Century

OLLI NEWSLETTER

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Getting to Know Wendy and Larry Robbins

Wendy and Larry Robbins are recent additions to the OLLI community. They began their relationship with the Berkshires by visiting Tanglewood in the early 80s. They purchased a home in Pittsfield in 2006 and moved in full time in 2008, realizing they had no reason to return to Philadelphia where they had lived for forty-one years.

Larry, a graduate of Harvard, the University of Wisconsin and UC Berkeley, joined the faculty of the University of Pennsylvania where he taught Shakespeare, Renaissance Literature and modern drama. After six years in the English Department, he was asked by the Wharton School to create a Communication Program to teach writing and speaking to MBA candidates and undergraduates. He also created the Wharton Teacher Development Program and was director of the Wharton Arts Management Program. He returned to the School of Arts and Sciences to become the founding director of Penn's Center for Teaching and Learning.

Larry was born in Denver, Colorado, where his family was part of a strong Jewish community. He is presently



at work on an autobiographical/fictional collection of short stories entitled *Legends of the Diaspora*. He also published *The Business of Writing and Speaking*. Larry has taught several courses for OLLI including Shakespeare's "So Potent Art" and "Learning to Lead."

Wendy was born and raised in Buffalo, New York. She did her undergraduate and graduate work in American History at UC Berkeley where she met and married Larry. She worked as an archivist at the Bancroft Library at Berkeley, and after earning her MSLS at Drexel University, became a reference librarian at the University of Pennsylvania and for eleven years

was the librarian at St. Joseph's Preparatory School. She later became a successful independent college consultant preparing students for college admissions. She published *The Portable College Adviser* receiving an award from the New York Public Library. She has written and edited other books.

Wendy and Larry have lived in Holland, Australia and Italy. In addition to travel, they love to hike and enjoy theater, dance, architecture

and chamber music. Their daughter, Liz Robbins, a reporter for *The New York Times*, presented an OLLI lecture for the Distinguished Speaker Series: "Fit to Print, Fit to Run." Wendy and Larry, along with Lora and Sig Tobias, are co-chairs of the series. Liz spoke on the future of print journalism and her award-winning book about the New York City marathon, *A Race Like No Other*.

They and their co-chairs have exciting future plans for the Distinguished Speaker Series. We are fortunate to have Wendy and Larry volunteering for OLLI.

— Marilyn Margolis, Associate Editor

Historic Elm Court Estate

Both the Elm Court Estate in Lenox and the elm tree for which it is named have significant histories. The estate, one of the oldest and grandest of the Gilded Age, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, was built in 1886 with the fortunes of two famous American families. William Sloane, wealthy heir to the W. & J. Sloane furniture company of New York married Emily Vanderbilt, whose father William Vanderbilt left \$10 million to each of his eight children. All eight used part of their millions to build mansions: Emily built Elm

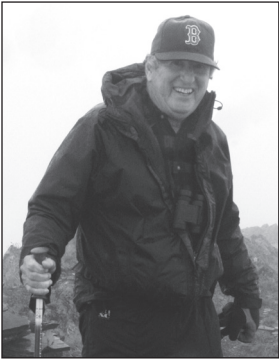
Court, her brother Cornelius II built the Breakers in Newport, RI. Designed by a well-known Boston firm, with grounds planned by Frederick Law Olmsted of Central Park fame, Elm Court began as a summer "cottage" as these mansions were called. The eponymous elm, which was over 300 years old, with an 8-foot diameter, was said to be the largest and oldest elm in the country.



A victim of the Dutch Elm beetle, the tree was cut down in 1953; the mansion, now owned by the fifth generation of the original family, remains.

(continues on page 4)

Meet Your Board Members



BOB DESROSIERS has been a BILL/OLLI member since retiring from Lockheed Martin in Pittsfield in 1998. Bob has a BS degree in electrical engineering from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and MSEE from the University of Connecticut, where he worked as a Unit Manager and systems engineer on numerous aerospace and undersea systems projects over the span of his career.

After experiencing the great quality of courses that BILL offered, Bob readily agreed to become a member of the Science Curriculum subcommittee. Bob and the late Dick Degenhardt established OLLI's Information Systems (IS) Committee. They worked to integrate computer technology into the OLLI office and classroom environments. Recently, Bob spearheaded an initiative to bring video-conferencing technology to the classroom so OLLI members living in the southern Berkshire region could participate interactively in select OLLI classes. He also contributes to the work of OLLI's Webmaster and OLLI's Media Committee. Bob brings an enthusiastic and welcoming approach to these IS Committee activities and he says: "We'd love to have some more volunteers to share in the fun."

Bob maintains a full leisure-time calendar. He and his wife Bonnie, OLLI's tireless Catalog Editor, travel often to visit grandchildren and family in upstate New York. They love Tanglewood, listening to jazz, hiking, downhill and cross-country skiing. Bob is also an active golfer at Wahconah Country Club and sails an Olympic class 470 racing boat. Whew!

OLLI is fortunate to benefit from Bob's wealth of talent.



NORMAN MICHAELS has been a member of BILL/OLLI for twelve years. He served as BILL's Financial Advisor, then as Treasurer of BILL/OLLI and is currently OLLI's Treasurer and Finance Committee Chair. Since becoming an OLLI, Norm has been particularly busy working with the BCC and BCC Foundation's accounting departments.

A graduate of the Bernard M. Baruch School of Business and Public Administration of The City College of New York, Norm has served on the faculties of The City University of New York and New York University.

Norm's love of the Berkshires dates back to 1957 when he worked as a camp counselor. He has been involved with the Berkshire community since 1996 when he semi-retired and became a full-time resident along with his wife, Wilma, also a long-time active OLLI Board member. He serves as co-chair of a summer fundraising event for the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires and is on its Endowment Committee. For the past fourteen years and has served as Chair of the White Pines Condominium Board in Stockbridge. He served as Board Chair of the Berkshire Opera Company for three years and as Treasurer for ten years.

Norm specializes in tax and business consultation to the marketing research industry, an area in which he remains active. He also has expertise in health care accounting. He is a member of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants, the NYS Society of CPAs, and the Massachusetts Society of CPAs. Norm has lectured at various meetings of marketing research organizations.

Norm and Wilma have two married daughters and three grandchildren who give them great joy. It is OLLI's good fortune to have Norm and his financial expertise as part of OLLI's team.

(Elm Court continued)

William Sloane died in 1915. A few years later, Emily married Henry White who had been the U.S. Ambassador to Italy and France and a member of the American Commission negotiating the peace after World War I. Shortly after the war, the "Elm Court Talks" were held at the mansion to plan the Treaty of Versailles and the League of Nations. In 1919, under the elm, White hosted a meeting of President Woodrow Wilson, Neville Chamberlain, Joseph Pershing, French Marshall Ferdinand Foch and other world leaders to discuss the formation of the League. In 1950, under the sponsorship of such prominent Berkshire residents as Winthrop M. Crane and Lawrence K. Miller, the Korean Ambassador to the U.S. opened the new "Elm Court Talks" on the Korean world crisis.

Emily Vanderbilt Sloane White retained the mansion until she died in 1946. It was then bought by her granddaughter Marjorie Wilde. She and her husband George Wilde, who also owned High Lawn Farm, ran the estate as an inn for four years hosting such famous Tanglewood guests as Pierre Monteux and Charles Munch; they closed it in 1952. Over fifty years of devastating vandalism, decay and thievery followed this closure. Many remaining massive elm trees suffered during this time and died from disease in the 1960s.

Upon the death of George Wilde in 1998, Elm Court passed to his daughter Lila Wilde Berle. In 1999, she sold it to her son and daughter-in-law Robert and Sonya and its renaissance began. They and Lila restored, renovated and recreated the historic site, the only Gilded Age estate that has remained in the original family. It opened as a hotel in the summer of 2010.

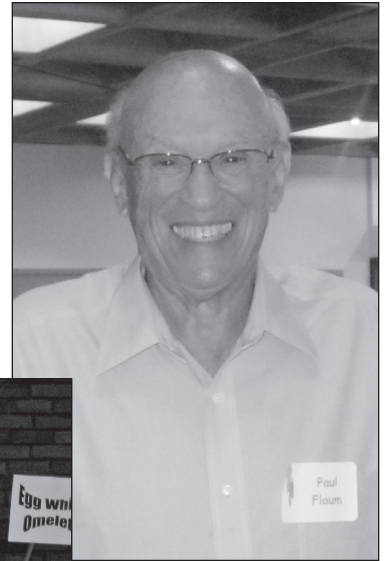
— Joanna Fribush, Editorial Staff

A Very Special Event

On October 10, a beautiful fall Berkshire day, 116 members and 11 guests enjoyed a special event which began with brunch at BCC prepared by seven OLLI chefs. Paul Flaum, past president of BILL/OLLI, was the guest speaker. He shared his insights into the play *The Crucible* which participants attended at Barrington Stage Company following brunch.

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

— Wilma Michaels, Assistant Editor



Paul Flaum, guest speaker



OLLI Chefs: Larry Klein, Warren Hagler, Howie Arkans, Ron Maitland, Sal Angelo, Barbara Barron, Carol Sabot



Welcome Table: Barbara Mandler, Audrey Schlanger, Chair Arline Breskin, Judy Keshner

Seated: Carol Bermingham, Arthur Brimberg, Fran Wolk
Standing: Carl Brown, Joel Wolk



Members and Guest: Len and Sue Margulies, Marilyn (guest) and Leonard "Bud" Rothenberg, Bonnie and Bill Sexton

Electronic Courses Available

We are pleased to announce a new service available through the generosity of Elske Smith, a valued OLLI member. Elske has agreed to lend many of her Teaching Company courses to OLLI members.

These materials are on reserve at the Jonathan Edwards Library on BCC's Pittsfield campus. To borrow a title you must go to the Library, present your current OLLI membership card at the Circulation Desk and sign out the material. You will be able to borrow materials for a one-month period of time (and a renewal period if no one is waiting for the title you have borrowed).

These courses are of the highest quality and are presented by many of the top instructors in the nation. We are very grateful to Elske for sharing this resource.

The following list details the titles and the electronic format of the courses:

AUDIO (CASSETTE) TAPES

Books that Made History: Books that Can Change Your Life

Concert Masterworks

Earth's Changing Climate

Great Ancient Civilizations of Asia Minor

Great Presidents

History of the Supreme Court

Medieval Europe: Crisis and Renewal

Must History Repeat the Great Conflicts of this Century?

Shakespeare: The Word and the Action

The Symphonies of Beethoven

AUDIO CDS

History of the English Language

How to Listen to and Understand Great Music

The American Identity: What Makes America Special

Understanding the Human Factor: Life and its Impact

Utopia and Terror in the 20th Century

VIDEO TAPES

A History of Freedom

Biology & Human Behavior (1998)

Great Principles of Science (1999)

Understanding the Universe: An Introduction to Astronomy (2001)

DVD

The Physics of History (2009)

Return Service Requested

