

With a Star-Studded Cast of Guest Speakers, Phil Deely's Courses Take the 'Long View'

Philip Sedgwick Deely, scholar, teacher, and Berkshires devotee, loves history and never tires teaching it.

OLLI students fortunate enough to have taken his classes can appreciate Deely's wealth of knowledge—be it ancient architecture, effects of the plague in medieval times or the origins of the monastic tradition in the Middle Ages.

One great appeal of Deely's courses is the depth of expertise available to a lecturer who can call on internationally renowned musicians, accomplished government leaders and others to add first-hand insights to the subjects he teaches.

Who better to discuss music of the baroque and the origins of written music, for instance, than the celebrated cellist, Yo-Yo Ma? Indeed, Ma spoke in a Deely class in late October, explaining how the major and minor scales we use in music today were developed in the 1600s, illustrating them on his cello.



Acclaimed cellist Yo-Yo Ma

To help students gain a deeper understanding about differences between East and West, Deely invited his friend, Pedro Ortiz, former Lord Mayor of Salamanca,

Spain, and a senior official of the World Bank, to discuss the split between the Anglo Saxon and Latin traditions in the development of Europe after the fall of the Roman Empire.

Deely said he wants students to grasp the importance of what he calls "the historical perspective—or the long view," which he believes "is lost to so many in the younger generation."

"Teaching history has helped me give (students) some perspective on the world they live in," said Deely in a recent interview. For example, the Black Plague, which wiped out nearly half the population of Europe in medieval times "was one of the biggest forces of change in the Middle Ages. The COVID-19 pandemic which we are living through today will also have a greater impact on society than most people realize," said Deely. "Understanding history can provide solace. Knowing about past pandemics tells us we've been through this before," he said.

Deely's academic preparation includes a Bachelor's degree from Hobart College, post graduate study at Exeter College Oxford, a Master of Arts degree from the University of Chicago, and as a Klingenstein Fellow at Teachers College of Columbia University.

The lifelong Stockbridge resident has imparted his "long view" as an instructor



Phil Deely on a recent visit to Madrid, Spain, one of the cities where he calls on internationally renowned officials to speak at his OLLI classes

of history at Bard College at Simon's Rock and head of the history department at the Foxcroft School. His career in education includes serving as Associate Head of School at the Ethel Walker School and as Principal at the Emma Willard School.

Teaching history has been an anchor in Deely's partnership with his wife of 50 years, Hilary Somers Deely. They met at Bard College at Simon's Rock in Great Barrington in the 1960s and "devoted our lives to education."

The Deely tradition continues in OLLI's spring semester with a course on ancient Greece and Rome and will include more guests.

(continued on page 2)

As I See It: A Letter from OLLI President Barbara Lane

I continue to marvel at how creative and resourceful our staff, lecturers and committee members have been in the face of the restrictions imposed by the coronavirus. Going from in-person to Zoom classes has enabled us to continue to offer courses and has made it possible for us to welcome lecturers from well beyond the Berkshires. I recently attended the first session of our class on *RBG: The Woman, The Litigator, The Justice* led by Tom Gerety and Virginia O'Leary. Historian Jane Sherron De Hart, the author of the biography *Ruth Bader Ginsburg: A Life*, was able to join us as guest lecturer via Zoom from her home in California.

While our Special Events Committee Chair Arline Breskin is down in warm and sunny Florida, she's been busy developing special events for us with offerings from the Clark, Sarasota Ballet, Harney Teas, the Tenement Museum, and other cultural institutions, all using distance learning technology. Howie Arkans continued to host an online version of the OLLI perennial favorite *Tuesdays at the Movies*, now in its twelfth year; and yes, Howie's still giving out prizes each week for the correct answers to the quiz. Though we were unable to mount our usual in-person exhibit, Art Show Committee members Chelly Serman, Maxine Bookless and Nan Bookless decided that the show must go on. At the end of January, we held an online reception and virtual art exhibit showcasing over 120 works by 46 talented OLLI members. Meanwhile, Distinguished Speakers Committee Members Hope Hagler, Lance Serman, Randy Winn and Phil Deely have been busy curating a series of thought-provoking lectures, all to be presented via Zoom, continuing well into this fall.

Over the years, I've often wished that we had an OLLI membership directory so that we could contact each other outside the classroom to continue a conversation, welcome a new member, suggest a cup of coffee, or possibly arrange to carpool with a classmate. Now we'll be able to do that thanks to the hard work of our Membership Committee Co-Chairs Monica Sinclair and Ellen Croibier, Technology Committee Chair Bob Desrosiers, Executive Director Megan Whilden, and Administrative Assistant Andy Ottoson. Be sure to check out Monica's piece in this issue on OLLI's new members-only, on-line Membership Directory.

Our staff and so many OLLI members continue to contribute their time and talents to keep our OLLI going and growing through these challenging times. I'm sure you all join me in a collective "THANK YOU" for their dedication and hard work.

Stay involved and stay well everyone.

All my best, Barbara



OLLI President Barbara Lane

(Phil Deely's courses
continued from page 1)

Walton Wilson, head of the acting department at the Yale University School of Drama will enrich a segment on Greek drama with a close look at playwright Aeschylus and his major works such as the *Oresteia*.

Besides teaching history seminars at OLLI, Deely is a fund-raising adviser to various non-profit organizations, providing his expertise as the principal consultant of Philip Sedgwick Deely & Associates. Deely's role in advancing culture in Berkshire County includes a ten-year stint at the Norman Rockwell Museum, where he served as Associate Director-External Relations from 1990 to 2000.

Deely obviously relishes his recent return to teaching history at OLLI, where he finds his students to be "of a very high caliber." Reflecting on his long career in education, he added, "the subjects change but the focus remains on the long view." — **Chris Guidette**

Phil Deely will be teaching *Glory and Grandeur: Ancient Greece and Rome* online this spring on Wednesdays at 9:30am from March 24 through April 28. To register, visit berkshireolli.org or call 413-236-2190.

OLLI UPDATE

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Volunteer with OLLI

We're looking for volunteers for the following committees:

- ◆ **OLLI's Diversity Committee:** help ensure OLLI's programs and outreach are diverse and welcoming.
- ◆ **OLLI's Technology Committee:** assist with OLLI's Zoom programming, website, data analysis, videos and more.

For more details, contact OLLI's Volunteer Coordinator Chelly Serman at 413-298-4366 or chellymarja@gmail.com.

A Membership Directory for OLLI Members

How many times have you thought: “I wish I could contact the person I saw in a Zoom class this morning and follow up on the discussion we had” or “I am going to a class in Williamstown, I wish I knew if anyone else in the class lives near me and wished to could carpool”?

Help is at hand.

Following in the footsteps of other OLLIs around the country and with the goal of helping to add to our sense of community within Berkshire OLLI, we are pleased to announce the addition of a Berkshire OLLI Membership Directory on our website.

This directory is only visible to Berkshire OLLI members—and will just show our members’ names and towns of residence. If you want to contact an individual member, you will be able to send them an email through the system, and you will only get their e-mail address or phone number if they respond to you and give you that information.

The directory is very easy to use. You can find it easily on the home page of our website, in the “About OLLI” section.

Since this information is only available to OLLI members you will need to sign in, just as you would to register for a class or event.

You will be able to search for a specific name or a list of members in a particular town. (An Advanced Search option allows you to look up by their winter address residence).

To contact a member, click on the member’s name and press the “Send Message” button.

If at any point you decide you do not want other members to contact you through the directory you can update your Member Profile and so indicate.

We know you will find this new feature useful, easy and convenient.

— **Monica Sinclair**

Editor’s Note



OLLI Update Editor Chris Guidette

We Didn’t Just Weather a Storm

In *Field of Dreams*, Kevin Costner hears a voice whisper “if you build it, they will come,” and he proceeds to plow under his farm’s corn crop and build a baseball diamond. The ghosts of turn-of-the 20th century baseball greats like “Shoeless” Joe Jackson appear along with carloads of ticket buying fans.

Sure, it’s only a movie but it’s also a parable about what can happen when you believe in what you’re doing and do it well. That’s been the story of our OLLI at BCC since the pandemic started and sheltering in place became our “new normal.”

Almost overnight OLLI’s volunteer instructors, staff and members segued from in-class courses to internet technology on Zoom. And class sizes actually increased. We did more than merely weather a storm. Because our classes were easy to access and course quality remained very high, participation ballooned.

Consider the following statistics presented at OLLI’s last board of directors meeting by Bob Desrosiers, Information Systems Committee chair: last February when the pandemic hit, we had slightly more than 1,250 members. As of this Feb. 18, we had 1,341 members, an increase of nearly 8 percent. And we experienced this growth at a time when other OLLIs around the country were reporting membership losses in the 40- to 50-percent range.

What’s more, half our new members come from outside Berkshire County. Nearly 20 percent of our members live more than 50 miles from Pittsfield and some have signed up for our classes and speaker presentations from as far away as Florida, Ohio, Texas, Washington, D.C., Seattle, Honolulu and even Paris!

So, what’s next? As we look toward a post-pandemic future, we expect to return to classrooms, but planning is under way for a “hybrid” system with courses offered in classrooms and online simultaneously. We have every reason to believe this new teaching option will be successful. Time will tell.

This issue of OLLI Update does double duty as both our newsletter and course catalog. Our Spring Course Schedule is on page 6 and you’ll find additional information on classes by checking on our website: berkshireolli.org.



In addition, we have included a lot of “news you can use,” from details of a new electronic directory developed by Membership Committee co-chairs Monica Sinclair and Ellen Croibier, to Peter Bluhm’s report on the revision of OLLI’s bylaws. Carl Shuster provides an update on the “Villages” program, announcing the award of a major grant and citation as a model example by a national organization. Villages is an organization which has partnered with OLLI to help older adults in Berkshire County. Mal Wasserman takes an in-depth look at the popular series of OLLI lectures on transformative technologies. And in this issue, we profile the popular instructor, Phil Deely, who, with a star-studded cast of guest speakers takes a long view of history.

— **Chris Guidette**

A Glimpse of the Future Through OLLI's Transformative Technologies Studies

Imagine a future in which when you need a new part for your dishwasher, Whirlpool sends instructions to your phone and your 3-D printer produces it for you. Or in a drive from New Mexico to the Berkshires, your car automatically reconfigures itself to match the weather, road conditions, and your new driving patterns. Before long you or your children might wear a "smart patch" which sends vital health information to your doctor automatically.

This amazing future is not far away. Innovators around the world—and here in the Berkshires—are creating it every day. **Transformative Technologies**—not innovation around the edges—but structural changes in how we live, learn, travel, get medical care, work, and communicate are inventing our future. The transformation is no less profound than how the advent of electricity changed our lives 140 years ago.

This past fall, an OLLI audience was treated to an in-depth look at our technological future. The program opened with a lecture and conversation about the autonomous automobile and its implications for our future. Eight course sessions followed and they drew a large audience within the Berkshires and in far-away locations. Thanks to Zoom, online technology substituted for classrooms because of the pandemic. Developed in partnership with Ben Sosne of the Berkshire Innovation Center and Ben Lamb of 1Berkshire, the course drew on a superb speaker roster of innovators, educators, and policy makers from our region and elsewhere in the world.

In a recent interview, the OLLI members who coordinated the series—Bob Braddick, Katherine Kidd, James Rosenstein, and Art Sherman—explained the program and their plans for its future.

Sherman said Transformative Technologies helps meet an objective in OLLI's new mission statement: to work cooperatively with other organizations in the Berkshires. The collaboration with 1Berkshire and the Berkshire Innovation Center for this program is a wonderful example of how this can work.

Kidd said the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts (MCLA) has incorporated course sessions into its STEM curriculum for K-12 students and Berkshire school

districts are using the technology sessions in teacher professional development programs. What's more, recordings of the technology sessions are being made available through a 1Berkshire podcast.

Feedback in a post-program survey was excellent. OLLI attendees responded very well to the level of presentations, the expertise of the many participants, and the impressive ambition of putting together a complex program that looks at the rapidly changing role of new technologies in our lives.



Ben Lamb

Some highlights of the fall 2020 program:

ASSESSING NEW TECHNOLOGIES • Transformative technologies present a number of important public policy questions. For example, how do we decide which new technologies are worth the cost and disruption they require? Who is prepared to make the best use of new technologies and how will the users be trained? How will the benefits of the new technologies be made available to everyone who needs them? And how do we

make sure artificial intelligence modalities will benefit rather than control or mislead people?

EDUCATION • Secondary education is going to change more than any other component of our education system as a result of the new transformational technology. We will have internship programs, restructuring how students learn about the new technologies, and how and which jobs need four-year college or university education.

The session on education looked at the lessons learned from the rapid switch to remote learning caused by the pandemic. School systems re-vamped to remote learning in weeks, showing that it is possible. A regional approach to education in the Berkshires is already providing resources, personnel, funding, and expertise beyond individual school districts.



Ben Sosne

INFRASTRUCTURE • Several of the Transformational Technology presentations centered on the challenges of broadband—a high-capacity transmission technique using a wide range of frequencies, which enables a large number of messages to be communicated simultaneously. The pandemic revealed a serious regional digital divide. Broadband limitations here in the Berkshires are affecting property values, educational achievement, and the strength of our innovation economy. Yet there are solutions—the small community of Mt. Washington, for instance, obtained cost-effective internet by having

strong local leadership, state funding, and creative financing.

SUPPORTING INNOVATION • Two of the programs examined where innovation comes from and how it is nurtured. The Berkshires has a long history of supporting transformative technologies in the past—in the paper industry, light manufacturing, and electricity—and is well positioned for the technological future.

Not all the challenges our new future presents are technological. They involve issues of regulation, public policy, education and training, and allocation of resources. In the session on healthcare, discussion focused on issues of funding, portability of information, and inequality of access to health care.

What's next for OLLI's Transformative Technologies team?

Transformative Technologies has been renamed the Tech Impact Forum and has produced a winter/spring 2021 online lecture series which focuses on—among other things—the digital economy in rural America and “big data” and workforce development.

— **Mal Wasserman**



Elisabeth Reynolds, the Executive Director of MIT's Task Force on the Work of the Future, spoke about the future of work in the fall Transformative Technologies course.



Alexis Wichowski, author, professor and deputy chief technology officer for the City of New York, was one of the fall Transformative Technologies speakers.

OLLI's Revised Bylaws Ready for a Final Vote

The OLLI Board of Directors has proposed a comprehensive revision of OLLI's bylaws. Parts of the bylaws have been amended several times, but this is the first overall rework since OLLI first affiliated with Berkshire Community College in 2007. The revision has been approved unanimously by the Board of Directors and will be submitted to the OLLI membership at the Annual Meeting on May 20.

Preparing this revision took many months. An ad hoc Bylaws Committee was chaired by OLLI Vice-President Gordon Josephson and included OLLI President Barbara Lane, and Past-Presidents Sandi Rubin and Peter Bluhm, as well as OLLI Executive Director Megan Whilden.

BCC President Ellen Kennedy also

reviewed the final draft. Josephson described the revision process as having taken “a step back to examine the profound growth of OLLI after nearly 15 years of affiliation, particularly with our larger membership and the wider scope and range of our activities.”

Several kinds of change are proposed. Some are housekeeping, such as clarifying the terms and size of the board and adopting some “best practice” suggestions for committee operations from a document prepared by the Osher National Resource Center.

More substantive changes include clarifying the duties of some OLLI committees, forming a new Finance Committee and requiring that an OLLI member serve as

chair for the Curriculum Council. A notable change is express authority to conducting meetings “using remote technology,” something that our experience with the pandemic demonstrated to be necessary.

The new revisions will be enacted if adopted by two-thirds of the votes cast at the upcoming May 20th annual meeting. According to Lane, “Our existing bylaws have held us in good stead for over a dozen years, but it is time for a re-ordered, clearer and more concise document. Many thanks go to everyone involved in this worthwhile project. I look forward to presenting the revised bylaws to the full membership for approval at this year's Annual Meeting.”

— **Peter Bluhm**

OLLI at BCC Spring 2021 Course Schedule

MONDAYS				
11:30am–1:00pm	M102	<i>Today's Headlines</i>	Lenny Tabs	Mar 22–Apr 26
1:30–3:00pm	M103	<i>Changes We Hardly Noticed</i>	Linda Halpern	Apr 5 – May 3
3:30–5:00pm	M104	<i>A Sonnet A Day Keeps Spring On Its Way</i> (CLOSED – AT CAPACITY)	Kate Sontag	Mar 22–May 10
TUESDAYS				
9:30–11:00 am	T101	<i>Trading with the Enemy: The German Military, Diamonds and Oil in World War II</i>	Carl Goodman	Mar 23–Apr 27
11:30am–1:00pm	T102	<i>The Federal Bureau of Investigation: 1908-Today</i>	Alan Rubin	Mar 23–Apr 27
1:30–3:00pm	T103	<i>The Right to Vote: Reexamining Women's Suffrage</i> (FREE COURSE!)	Katherine Kidd	Mar 23 – May 4
3:30–5:00pm	T104	<i>Troy</i>	Richard Maturro	Mar 23–Apr 27
WEDNESDAYS				
9:30–11:00 am	W101	<i>Glory and Grandeur: Ancient Greece and Rome</i>	Philip Deely	Mar 24–Apr 28
11:30am–1:00pm	W102	<i>Islands in Deep Time</i>	Markes Johnson	Mar 24–Apr 28
1:30–3:00pm	W103	<i>Indigenous Voices: Presentations by Native Americans</i>	Michael Wilcox	Mar 24–Apr 28
3:30–5:00pm	W104	<i>The Sovereignty Goddess</i>	Susan Wozniak	Mar 24–Apr 28
THURSDAYS				
9:30–11:00 am	R101	<i>Real Estate Investments 101: A Basic Introduction</i>	Stephen Pearlman	Mar 25–Apr 29
11:30am–1:00pm	R102	<i>Luminism and Beyond: Currents in Landscape Art 1850-1914</i>	Ralph Pearson	Mar 25–Apr 29
1:30–3:00pm	R103	<i>Demystifying Home Cooking for Better Health</i>	Anna Gershenson	Apr 8–Apr 29
FRIDAYS				
9:30–11:00 am	F101	<i>Great Decisions 2021</i>	John Dickson	Mar 26–Apr 30
11:30am–1:00pm	F102	<i>Science Conversations</i>	Hank Gold	Mar 26–Apr 30
1:30–3:00pm	F103	<i>Hemingway in Paris: A Moveable Feast & The Sun Also Rises</i> (CLOSED – AT CAPACITY)	John Clarke	Mar 26–Apr 30
1:30–3:00pm	F104	<i>Berkshire Performing Arts Previews</i>	Naomi Spatz & Barbara Waldinger	April 2–Apr 30

To sign up, please visit BerkshireOLLI.org or call 413-236-2190 (M-F, 9am-4pm EST)

Thank You OLLI Angels

As a non-profit organization, OLLI at BCC relies on the generosity of members like you to continue our vibrant educational programming, scholarships, mentoring BCC students and more. The donors listed below gave between July 1, 2020 – February 28, 2021. Thank you!

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Villages of the Berkshires, Partnering with OLLI, Awarded over \$76,000 to Help Older Residents

A Berkshire County organization that works in partnership with OLLI at BCC to help older adults in Berkshire County has been awarded a major grant by the federal government’s National Community Care Corps. The \$76,737 grant was awarded for a one-year period ending July 31.

OLLI member Carl H. Shuster, Villages co-founder and vice president, said the funds would be used to advance “a joint effort between Berkshire Community College (BCC) and the Villages to find ways to engage students in the service-learning program at BCC. The students will provide services to Villages members such as assistance with computers, iPhones and other technology.”

Shuster added that the grant allows Villages to add volunteer Community Care Corps coordinator Stephen Hager to its staff and to underwrite the cost of a recently hired service-learning staff member at BCC, Tara Jacobsen.

In announcing the award, Paul Weiss, president of the Oasis Institute which administers Community Care Corps, said the Berkshire Villages “volunteer model

was chosen over hundreds of other outstanding programs across the country.”

“This grant is a tremendous vote of confidence in the direction we’re taking,” said Berkshires Villages President Howard Shapiro, who also is an OLLI at BCC member.

Barbara Lane, president of OLLI at BCC, said the lifelong learning group is pleased to have an expanded role in Villages work. “OLLI looks forward to continuing to collaborate with the Villages to provide educational and social opportunities and support services to our respective members,” said Lane.

Trained Villages volunteers provide such services as transportation, a call-in program for members who live alone, and assistance with household tasks. The non-profit currently serves Lenox, Lee, Stockbridge and Pittsfield. The program is to expand to more towns in south county.

OLLI’s Board of Directors unanimously approved an agreement to provide easy access for OLLI members seeking services offered by the Villages and for Villages’ members seeking access to programs and events offered by OLLI.



The agreement also provides for discounted membership fees for OLLI members who wish to join the Villages and discounted fees for Villages members who wish to become members of OLLI.

Beside the exchange of member services, OLLI and the Villages will explore ways to share in the marketing of their respective services to older residents who are not now affiliated with either organization.

The Berkshires is home to some 18,000 residents over the age of 65. Villages of the Berkshires was founded by members of OLLI at BCC and created as a part of the national Village to Village network of communities.

To obtain further information go to: www.villagesoftheberkshires.org.

— Carl H. Shuster