Osher Swings at Our First Back-To-School Picnic

By Joan Morse Gordon

On September 7, a late summer’s glorious afternoon, a day with clear skies and low humidity, 165 Osher members and friends were “In the Mood” as they mingled, played games, ate, and (a few) danced to the warmly received Glass City Band on campus for Osher’s First Annual Picnic. Mike Plaskett, co-host of WESA’s Rhythm Sweet & Hot and Osher study leader, served as emcee.

Organized by co-chairs Rhoda Eligator and Marlene Haus and their committee—Lynn Decker, Carmen Osborne, Joe Shirk, Betsy Martin, Rita Zecher, Thelma Snyder, Linda Bishop, and Byron Gottfried, the event started with members divided into seven groups for a trivia game to determine what we all shared in

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In Memoriam: Lucian Caste
Founder and President
By Joe Scorpion

With sadness we note the passing of Lucian Caste on July 24. He was a founding member of our Academy for Lifelong Learning (A.L.L.), now Osher, and its second president, serving from 1995-1996. Lucian was a noted architect. He received his bachelor of architecture degree in 1950 from the Carnegie Institute of Technology

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Fall 2013
The Curriculum Committee has once again offered us a wealth of courses to enrich our lives. The fall brings us back to campus for classes, cultural events in town and on campus, Buctober, and, of course, Pittsburgh’s new visitor, the “Rubber Ducky.” What an exciting time to be back in the swing of things.

Did you come to the picnic? If not, we are sorry you missed it. We hope to make our Back-to-School Picnic an annual event. It certainly was a big success. Many members had the opportunity to meet one another for the first time as we introduced ourselves in our assigned circles. We listened to great music, and enjoyed the beautiful weather. Our thanks to the Membership Committee and staff for organizing this well-attended picnic.

The events that Osher sponsors are designed to encourage friendships in and out of class. We have grown over the years, but our desire to build community has always remained our steadfast goal. Please join fellow Osher members at our free lectures, our holiday luncheon, and other planned events. See you in class!

In many cases, our staff is finding our new system much easier to use than our prior system. It also provides us with a lot of data that we previously did not have available. The system will allow members to view all of your course registrations in one location; see which classes you are waiting to get into; view a calendar of all courses; and most important, view the online catalog, which always has the most updated information on all courses.

We are excited about our new online registration system and look forward to the time when everyone has the chance to experience its many benefits. For those who do not have email, we will continue to send information by surface mail.

September Picnic

Continued from page 1 common. Some groups were luckier than others. Group 4 all had hair. Group 5 all had seen Annie Hall. But all groups had a love of learning.

On the lawn near the fascinating architectural details of the Fine Arts Building, a tent was set up for buffet dining. The Osher board generously underwrote part of the event costs.

Afterwards, a majority of those answering the picnic survey felt the venue, band, and food were “great.” To hear the band play old Glenn Miller tunes like “Pennsylvania Six-five-O-O-O” and get a clear sense of the event, watch Joe Shirk’s video online by searching for Osher@CMU Picnic 2013.
Rutgers OLLI
Benchmarks With
CMU and Pitt
Counterparts
By Gloriana St. Clair

On Wednesday, October 2, Shino G. John, associate vice president for strategic growth and international development, and Megan Novak, senior program coordinator, from Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, came to Carnegie Mellon University to benchmark with OLLI-CMU and OLLI-Pitt. In the benchmarking session, Jan Davis, president, Byron Gottfried, Curriculum Committee co-chair, Lyn Decker, registrar, and Gloriana St. Clair, university liaison and board secretary, represented CMU. Attending from Pitt were Judy Bobenage, director, and Pat Szczechanski, coordinator. Rutgers is engaging in a formal comparison of its Osher Lifelong Learning program with that of its nearby comparators—three Pennsylvania Oshers and two or three other Oshers.

Benchmarking is a formal process undertaken after an organization has done an analysis of its own processes. Benchmarking is done as part of continuous quality improvement or total quality management work. Many kind of organizations in education, business, and government rely on benchmarking to help them determine whether the practices being used are the most effective and efficient ones.

In quality circles, analyses are based on a value proposition. For each university, the value of having an OLLI is compelling. Education institutions want to create students who will be lifelong learners and want to continue to have strong relationships with those committed students.

Last year, OLLI-Rutgers broke even, but for the three years before that, their budget was in deficit. They have been visiting various Osher organizations to help them think through how to run their program so that it would not have a loss. Their university is changing its financial practices in a way that may result in high payments from the Osher program to Rutgers University. That would make their deficit much worse.

Shino John and Megan Novak were headed off to Penn State to talk with them about their OLLI situation. When the visits are concluded, they will be presenting a report to their university continuing education administrators and board and will be sharing their conclusions with those who benchmarked with them.

The day’s exchange of information was a rich experience. OLLI-CMU President Jan Davis concluded that both Pittsburgh programs are enormously blessed to have such supportive and generous universities.

In Memoriam: Lucian Caste
Continued from page 1

and was most active in CMU alumni affairs, as well as serving on the Board of Trustees. He served in World War II with the U.S. Marine Corps (5th Division) and participated in the invasion of Iwo Jima in 1945.

He had an abiding love for his alma mater and an interest in its history and growth and visited Andrew Carnegie’s birthplace in Scotland. Lucian was responsible for reuniting Carnegie’s family and the Carnegie Mellon “family” by bringing Andrew Carnegie’s granddaughter to Pittsburgh for a visit and a presentation at CMU.

Lucian treasured his family and had many good friends from all walks of life in his community and around the world. We will remember him for his wisdom, guidance, and direction in our early years and for his devotion to lifelong learning.
Introducing Our Osher Staff

Chelsea Prestia

Meet Chelsea Prestia, Osher's newest staff member. Chelsea came on board July 29 as Office Assistant, a title that covers a multitude of activities.

She is originally from nearby Ellwood City and at present lives in the Bloomfield neighborhood of Pittsburgh. Chelsea attended Point Park University, where she majored in photojournalism. She worked for two years as the photo editor on the school newspaper. Chelsea is also familiar with layout and design, which means that Osher members can expect to see her design in posters for various events.

Chelsea is a very active person. In addition to her Osher duties, she works part time at the Andy Warhol Museum as a gallery attendant, a job she started while at Point Park. She also assists with event planning at the Carnegie Science Center. She enjoys reading, theater, and live (alternative and indy rock) music.

Kalyani Kedarnath

Another relative newcomer to Osher is Kalyani Kedarnath, who joined the staff this past February as Database and Finance Administrator.

Some years ago during her mother’s illness, Kalyani took a several years’ break from her work at Carnegie Mellon. She had been employed in the Office of Research Integrity and Compliance and the Office of University Advancement and Alumni Relations. Kalyani is pleased to have returned to the CMU campus and enjoys working in the Osher office. She especially is happy to have joined Osher during our transition toward an online registration system.

Kalyani grew up in Newton, Connecticut. She met and married her husband, a cardiologist, in Chicago, where they lived for two years. Incidentally, the name Kedarnath is the place name of a holy site in northern India, and adopting a place name is a tradition of the country.

Kalyani and her husband moved to the North Hills area, where they raised their two sons. Elder son Vikram is attending medical school at Brown University. After graduating from Harvard, younger son Vijay is working as an analyst at Goldman Sachs in New York.

Kalyani and her family have traveled worldwide extensively. She enjoys reading and belongs to a book club whose members include backgrounds from the Philippines, Poland, Chile, Mexico, Sweden and India. Unbelievably, Kalyani also finds time to volunteer at the Hillman Cancer Center; she talks with the cancer patients while they are receiving treatment. She also volunteers at Global Links, where used hospital and medical equipment and supplies are restored and sent to needy countries.

Kalyani is impressed with our volunteers, referring to them as different, dedicated, and “amazing.”

If you are in the vicinity of the Osher office, drop in and introduce yourself to these new staff members. You’ll be glad you did!

Filomena Conti
Exercise for Older Adults: the Power of Prevention

What one thing will reduce our risk of high blood pressure, diabetes, colon cancer, heart disease, anxiety, dementia, depression, and death? On September 25, an Osher audience learned that the answer is exercising 30 minutes a day, five to six times a week. To a crowd of 80 to 90 in McConomy Hall, Bill Presutti, Jr., Ph.D., lectured about the role of exercise for aging adults, a talk and slide show with facts, stats, and humor.

Recently retired from Duquesne University, where he served as a faculty member and associate dean in the Palumbo-Donahue School of Business for 29 years, Bill Presutti is a lifelong fitness enthusiast and a personal trainer certified (at age 65) by the American Council on Exercise.

Dr. Presutti’s statistics show that seniors who set aside 1% of their time, 150 minutes a week, for walking can reduce their risk of fatal coronary heart attack by 50%.

Aging isn’t the risk factor; muscle atrophy is. People stop moving, then become weak, then fall, and then are injured. Moving our bodies builds healthy bones, muscles, and joints, making us stronger and more independent.

Thirty minutes of exercise five times a week burn 1,000 calories per week, which studies have linked to the health benefits mentioned above. If you are inactive, Dr. Presutti suggests starting with five minutes of exercise four times a week and working gradually up to the optimal one hour five times a week.

Bill Presutti

Psychological benefits

Dr. Presutti has always worked out because “it makes me feel good.” Aerobic exercise improves our psychological and cognitive abilities. It cuts the risk of Alzheimer’s and of dementia, and lowers the risk of depression and suppressed anger.

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From Bill Presutti’s Presentation: Info about Nutrition:

Caloric requirements for older adults

Women: seditary — 1600 calories per day
       moderately active — 1800 calories per day
       active — 2000 calories per day

Men: seditary — 2000 calories per day
     moderately active — 2200-2400 calories per day
      active — 2400-2800 calories per day

Nutritional guidelines

Increase fiber intake to 25-30 grams per day from a variety of foods, including whole grain cereals and breads and whole foods like fresh apples.

Drink eight 8-ounce glasses of water per day.

Choose nutrient-dense foods, including richly colored fruits and vegetables (e.g., spinach, sweet potatoes, green, red, and orange peppers, blueberries, blackberries, bananas).
Civil Liberties: Supreme Court Decisions and Their Impact, with E.J. Strassburger
By Ed Friedman

The establishment and preservation of our civil liberties is embodied in the Constitution and its amendments, most especially those provided in the Bill of Rights. I have recently taken the CMU-Osher course taught by E. J. Strassburger “The Bill of Rights: Civil Liberty Issues of Our Times.”

The course material and its presentation were so compelling that this is the second time I have taken this course. E. J. preceded each class by sending us readings pertaining to court decisions that we were to discuss. He invited a lot of feedback from the class participants, which invariably led to some very lively discussion.

A good deal of the course material was focused on decisions related to the First Amendment, which deals with freedom of religion, speech, and the press, as well as rights of assembly and petition. I was particularly interested in the cases concerning the separation of church and state and those related to free speech issues. It was revealing to me that many of these cases are not as clear cut as one might imagine just by looking at the basic issues involved, but are indeed subtle to the extent that the interpretation of what is written in the Constitution is to a great degree in the eye of the beholder. Indeed, it appears that the court, though ostensibly consisting of nine independent arbiters, is in fact a deliberative political body with the philosophies of the individual justices being of great importance.

E. J. discussed several cases that highlighted examples of despicable behavior and activities that are protected by the First Amendment. These included rallies by the Ku Klux Klan that were egregiously offensive as well as shameful picketing at a soldier’s funeral.

The Citizens United decision removed the ban on corporations and other special-interest organizations using their funds for direct advocacy and allowed them to expressly call to vote for or against specific candidates. In my opinion, this severely undermines the democratic principle upon which our political system is supposedly
Our Osher Classrooms

based, and, apparently, was based on the right of the contributing entity to exercise free speech via the checkbook.

Many other cases pertaining to, among others, the voting rights act, the death penalty, LGBT rights, separation of church and state, and conflicts between national security and privacy rights were discussed in the class. This was a fascinating exploration of the role of the federal court system as it relates to the preservation of our fundamental liberties.

The Science of Nuclear Power and Safety with Ezra Lippincott

By Trudy Friedman

Did you ever wonder who knows enough about nuclear physics to keep our nuclear reactors operating safely? Did you ever wonder just what a nuclear reactor is, exactly? I challenged myself to take the class on nuclear physics, about which I knew close to nothing. Even with an A in high school physics, it did not register why all those calculations are necessary.

Dr. Ezra Lippincott is a member of the elite group of nuclear physicists who were involved in the early research and development. He earned his doctorate in nuclear physics at MIT and worked for several years on the West Coast at the Battelle Research Institute, a not-for-profit set up in the 1930s by Gordon Battelle. His work centered on reactor research and was sponsored by the Atomic Energy Commission. After Westinghouse took over the part of the project studying reactor safety issues, Dr. Lippincott transferred to Westinghouse, eventually moving to Pittsburgh in 1985.

As study leader for the nuclear physics course, his objective was to educate the class in the basics of safety, the results of radiation exposure, and how nuclear waste disposal is treated. With the helpful aid of graphs, charts, and pictures we learned about many areas of this science. He enlightened our Osher class with explanations of gamma rays, beta rays, half-lives, coolants, and more.
CMU Feeds Big Bellies
By Joan Gaul

Amazing what catches the eye as you walk across the CMU campus: the buildings, the flowers, the students, the trees, the brown BigBelly Solar Compactors. The BigBelly Solar Compactors? They first caught mine a year or so ago. Their signage makes great promises for our environment. I wanted to know more about them, and after an Internet search and a recent conversation with Barbara Kviz, CMU’S environmental coordinator in CMU’s Facility Management Services, I do.

The BigBelly’s claims to fame are that it reduces cost by signaling when it is full, thus eliminating four out of five pickups by truck; reduces clutter because it compacts at the point where other containers would overflow—the BigBelly holds five times the trash of similar but passive containers; allows for the sale of the recyclable materials; and reduces fuel consumption because it runs entirely on solar power.

Simply stated, the bin has an electric eye beam that indicates that the contents, trash or recyclables, are high enough to trigger the mechanism that squishes the contents. It can wirelessly communicate with a dispatch system to tell it when a container is full and ready for pickup. In cities that use it, the BigBelly can save money by eliminating unnecessary garbage truck pickups. All this is, mysteriously to me, accomplished with a built-in solar panel that can operate without direct sunlight and uses no energy.

How long have they been around and how effective are they? CMU bought one BigBelly in 2005 to try, and bought two more in 2006. “At that point,” says Ms. Kviz, “they looked like big clunky book drops.” She added, “They have come a long way.” The university bought ten more in 2012 and two more in 2013. There are currently twelve sets on campus. Their advantages are that the bins do not overflow, the contents don’t get wet, and animals can’t get into them. Although CMU’s trash is compacted and goes to landfill, compacted trash is less expensive to haul than usual trash. The bins operate by satellite. They are wireless, operating on a solar-paneled battery. Thus they are not on the grid.

Does Pittsburgh have enough sun to operate the compactors? It does. While the amount of energy varies with the weather, there is enough sun so that CMU uses a lot more solar energy than that used by the BigBellies. Ms. Kviz reports “a 12-Kw Rooftop Solar System was installed September 2006 . . . on the building at 300 S. Craig Street.” There is a solar decathlon house near Margaret Morrison at the Children’s School. According to Wikipedia, “Solar Decathlon is an international competition that challenges 20 collegiate teams to design, build, and operate the most attractive, effective, and energy-efficient solar-powered house.” CMU may have the largest solar panel array in the city.

A hungry BigBelly

CMU’s efforts towards a clean environment do not stop with solar. There are green roof gardens, and as you walk through Porter Hall from Frew Street to Osher classes in Wean, you can’t have missed the blue bins that individually invite cans, bottles, and paper; it turns out that there is a payback on cardboard and paper. There is much more to learn at the website http://www.cmu.edu/environment.

We are a conscientious lot, we Osherites. As you walk through Wean, have a good look at the separate blue bins. Feed them, and when next you are outside on campus carrying something you don’t want, feed a BigBelly.
The Role of Exercise In Aging
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Recommended exercise
Because low-impact exercise is preferable for older adults, experts call walking the “nearly perfect exercise.” Biking and working around the house and garden, if done for 30 continuous minutes, can also be a good aerobic exercise. Non-weight-bearing exercises do not rebuild bones.

Why we fall
Falls are the leading cause of injury in people over 65, and the leading cause of falls is muscle weakness. The mere fear of falling can cause people to fall because they shorten their stride and start shuffling their feet. Avoiding walking can reduce the load on the hip muscles so that they no longer stabilize the weight of the body as it is moving.

Strength training to preserve muscle mass
Dr. Presutti explained that aerobic exercise improves cardiorespiratory fitness but doesn’t prevent the loss of muscle tissue. Strength training with small weights can help preserve joint flexibility, muscle mass, and resting heart rate. Strengthening muscles, bones, and connective tissue lessens stress on joints and helps to manage or reduce arthritic pain. Strength training boosts mental health, enhances appearance through better body composition, and improves the ability to perform the activities of daily living.

CMU Holds 20th Annual Food Drive

Scheduled from November 4 through November 15, Carnegie Mellon University’s annual Food Drive is in its twentieth year. This is one of the largest private food drives in the area.

Last year, a total of 7,389 pounds of food items and $4,791.35 in cash was contributed to the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank. Over the past several years, our Osher program has participated in this annual drive, with members generously donating non-perishable food items, paper products, toiletries, etc., as well as cash.

Osher members can drop off their donations at three collection sites: the Osher office in the basement of the Hunt Library and classrooms 4707 and 4708 in Wean Hall, where donations can be placed in cardboard cartons set up for the drive. Further, on November 6, members can participate in the One Day-One Can drive by dropping off a donation at the University Center and receiving a raffle ticket for a prize drawing. Watch for notices!

We hope that with the continuing help of our Osher members, the university can exceed last year’s totals.

Leslie Evans

Joe Scorpion

Osher member Helen Wilson practices a tai chi movement. Stretching routines, including tai chi and yoga, can reverse not only the loss of flexibility but also the loss of balance as we age.
Barbara Tisherman Honored at Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens

When Barbara Tisherman received a gift of two orchid plants, she had no idea they would become a lifelong passion. She joined the Orchid Society of Western Pennsylvania and served as show chairman and president. She has remained active in the local group, and in order to learn more about her favorite plants, she started attending many shows and national meetings.

She entered the judging program of the American Orchid Society and has judged many national shows and six World Orchid Conferences (WOC). Her love of orchids, and especially the “slipper orchids,” those that have a pouch instead of a flat lip, led her to found and become president of the Slipper Orchid Alliance, the only international organization devoted to this group of orchids. At the most recent WOC in 2011, she arranged and presided over an unprecedented slipper orchid forum that was attended by 100 enthusiasts from around the world.

On October 5, Phipps Conservatory and the Orchid Society of Western Pennsylvania honored her many contributions to the worldwide orchid community by naming the Barbara Tisherman Slipper Orchid Collection at Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens. The aim of the collection is to preserve important Paphiopedilum species and historical hybrids for scientific study and public enjoyment and education. A day-long celebration included four eminent national and international speakers on diverse slipper orchid topics, tours of the conservatory, and an evening recognition ceremony. A plaque has been placed in the orchid room designating this special collection.

The Orchid Society of Western Pennsylvania and Phipps Conservatory have had a unique collaboration, in which the OSWP has, in addition to helping directly with the orchids, taken on an advisory role in enhancing the orchid collection to become nationally recognized. It is expected that the designation of this special collection will inspire donations from orchid growers from throughout the United States and even other countries, so that they will be preserved as a “Living Museum.”

NBC Today Visits Osher Study Leaders and Class

Every month, NBC’s Today’s show includes a segment of “Life Reimagined Today” with Jane Pauley, a series of brief features produced and sponsored by AARP that highlight people over 50 trying out life-changing experiences. On Tuesday, November 26, you may see a glimpse of a class in our fall Osher course “Shared Living Models: Intentional Community Comes to the ‘burgh!” in that segment.

Louise Machinist, one of the study leaders, sent a tweet to Jane Pauley about the cooperative household she shares with fellow study leaders Karen Bush and Jean McQuillin. The result was an interview and photo shoot with Jane Pauley at the Mt. Lebanon home the three share, and filming of the Osher class on October 11. The course, also led by Stefani Danes and Maria Piantanida, discussed concepts and issues involved in alternative housing arrangements.

“Reimagining Life” segments on Today are brief, and there’s no way to know whether film of our Osher class will be included in the November 26 show. But the show’s interest in the topic and the class underscores the value of our Osher program and our study leaders.

From left: Karen Bush, Louise Machinist, and Jean McQuillin celebrate their ninth year of cooperative living.

Photo is from their website, myhouseourhouse.com.
Ice Cream Social
Thanks Osher Volunteers

Osher's Ice Cream Social, the annual event thanking our many volunteers, took place on August 14 at the Union Project, a restored church building that is home to several nonprofit organizations, providing community programming and arts space. Especially interesting features of the building are the stained glass windows, top left, restored by volunteers, some trained in workshops offered by the Union Project. One of those volunteers was Osher volunteer Flip Conti, who enjoyed seeing the results of her handiwork. Top right, Osher staff members Chelsea Prestia and Kalyani Kedarnath.

Photos by Joe Shirk
Help Wanted: Day Trip Chair

Each year we offer members several day-long bus trips to the tri-state area. Roz Sherman has organized our Day Trips for several years and is looking to transition by the end of the year. If you have taken any of these wonderful trips or would like to participate in the planning, organizing, and execution of similar adventures, please contact the office to discuss.

More hands make less work. We would also consider creating a committee that would plan a year’s worth of trips and ask that each committee member be in charge of one trip/year. Training and office support will be provided. If you have an adventurous spirit and good organizational skills, come help us continue these successful events beyond the classroom!

Contact Lyn Decker at 412 268-7489 or ldecker@andrew.cmu.edu