A Tale of a Red Tail: A Wildlife Drama on Campus
By Millicent Lynch

One morning in June, while walking to work alongside the Fine Arts Building, my thoughts were interrupted by loud screeching. I was intrigued and figured it must be a hawk, since I have seen them regularly flying around campus. (And anyone who has read Red-Tails in Love about the red-tailed hawks in New York City nesting on the building where Mary Tyler Moore lives can relate to the ability of hawks to mesmerize.) The further I walked, the louder the screeching became. I looked to the left, and yes, there in one of the alcoves on the side of the building, was a hawk. I assumed that even though it was rather large, it must have been a juvenile. I watched him for a while, becoming more distressed at his distress. Did he flee the nest and then become afraid to fly? Was he calling for his parents to rescue him? Where were his parents? Finally I decided I had better get to work, but I came back to check on him mid-morning.

He was still in the alcove, crying. Since I was on my way to the University Center, I stopped and asked Katie Robertson, the scheduling manager, if she could call someone on campus and explain the bird’s plight. Katie called the University Police. Later that morning, I checked again and the hawk was still there, crying out.

I then called the Animal Rescue League Wildlife Center and asked them what, if anything, could be done. The Wildlife Center could not help but said if the bird continued to be in distress, the Pennsylvania Game Commission could come out to retrieve the bird. Since this drama was happening on a Friday, I thought the poor thing could be stranded all weekend. I eventually emailed Tom Odgen, chief of police, and he assured me that campus security would monitor the bird over the weekend.

Finally it was time to go home. I left Hunt Library and did not hear any screeching. I walked by the Fine Arts Building, and the hawk was gone. I’m not sure how this story resolved itself, but I am glad the hawk was able to fly off. In this case at least, nature did take care of its own.

The Houses of Madison County
My Mission Experiences in Mars Hill, North Carolina
By Beatrice P. Jones

Sylvia Sachs wrote an article for our Fall 2008 newsletter describing the Osher trip to Asheville, North Carolina. They visited the Biltmore Estate, the boarding house of Thomas Wolfe, and Carl Sandburg’s home. It sounded like a great trip.

I got a chance to see how beautiful this area is when I went with a group of fellow parishioners from Shadyside Presbyterian Church together with people from the Presbyterian Church, Sewickley, and the First Presbyterian Church of Burlington, Iowa, to work on houses in Madison County. Why Madison County?

The Community Housing Coalition of Madison County was organized through expanding a ministry of Media Presbyterian Church in suburban Philadelphia, which organized an annual mission trip in partnership with Habitat for Humanity of Madison
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From the President

By Julian Eligator

In every catalogue (page 4 of the 2009 Fall edition) you will find our Golden Rules. Perhaps you haven’t read them.

With almost 1,800 members in our community of learners, we are, in a sense, living together in a small community. As in all communities that function well, we respect each other. Usually our slipups are not worthy of comment. So why do we have our rules? Unfortunately, I find it necessary to write because of a small minority. We have recently had three difficult episodes that show us we need to pay more attention to our Golden Rules. These rules as modified will be found in each subsequent catalogue.

Please read and abide by our Golden Rules:

1) Please email or call the office if you are unable to take courses to which you have been admitted. Your prompt cancellation allows another member to enroll in the class. If you plan on being absent from your class, please contact your study leader assistant, who is responsible for taking attendance.

2) Notifying us of your absence for the first session is important so that you are not dropped from your class.

3) Please attend only those courses for which you are registered. Attendance will be verified in each class.

4) Invited guests, whether they are Osher members or nonmember guests, are welcome only with the approval of the study leader.

5) Please be quiet in the hallways! If you are waiting in the halls before a class begins, please remember that other classes (including Carnegie Mellon classes) may be in session. Your conversation may disrupt a class in progress.

6) Please turn off your cell phone before your class begins.

7) Remember—no food or beverages, except water, allowed in the classrooms.

8) Please remove all papers, newspapers, trash, and water bottles when leaving a class. Leave all chairs neatly arranged after a class.

9) Our study leaders are volunteers and dedicate many hours preparing class lectures and materials. Their efforts result in the exceptional classes that we are so proud to offer. By signing up for a class, you accept an obligation to attend your class. There is no better reward for a study leader than consistent attendance, engagement, and active participation.

10) Controversy is a great stimulus to learning but is meaningful only in an atmosphere of civility. Should the class members or the study leader feel those conditions are violated, the disruptive member may be asked to drop the class.

11) Be sure to write a brief course evaluation during the last class. This provides valuable information for the Curriculum Committee.

Two other items:

To Anonymous: The reason that we do not hold lectures in the afternoons is that all rooms are used by Carnegie Mellon students.

Your comments, questions, and suggestions are important to our program. Call me or Millie or send us an email with your ideas.

Evening Lectures

“Was Anything Accomplished at the G20?” Dan Simpson, associate editor of the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, opened our evening lecture season on October 6 with a skeptical, yet possibly hopeful, look at the event that dominated Pittsburgh media for weeks. The following attractions are planned for the next few months:

Nov 4, 2009
Cardiologist William Follansbee, MD, professor of medicine and professor of radiology at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine and director of nuclear cardiology at UPMC Presbyterian, will talk on “Our Heritage of Sacrifice: Perspectives on the Health Care Reform Debate.”

January 14, 2010
Andrew Masich, president of the John Heinz History Center, will talk on “The Young George Washington in Western Pennsylvania.”

February 9, 2010
Edward J. Reis, former director of the George Westinghouse Museum and current Westinghouse Historian at the John Heinz History Center, will re-enact the life of George Westinghouse.
An Extraordinary Trip to Washington, DC

By Gene Dickman

It was another super trip with Rose Marie DeRiso, our overnight trips arranger. Twenty-nine of us boarded the deluxe coach at 7:30 a.m. on May 29 and departed for Washington, D.C.

We arrived at 1:30 p.m. at the new Capitol Visitors Center located underground between the Capitol and the Supreme Court building. The tour was led by a very knowledgeable docent. With its soaring spaces and skylight view of the Capitol dome, we were on a journey of discovery. We learned how Congress works, how the magnificent building was built, and how we, as citizens, can participate in our representative democracy.

Our Hilton Hotel in Alexandria, Va., was comfortable and conveniently located for dozens of restaurants from simple to deluxe.

All day Saturday we were immersed in the history of Abraham Lincoln, our sixteenth president, by Alex Kramer, our very own study leader and docent. Beginning at Ford’s Theatre, we heard a dramatic presentation of the fateful day of Lincoln’s assassination. Then on to President Lincoln’s “Camp David” cottage at the Old Soldier’s Sanctuary, opened to the public for the first time in 2008. We had an in-depth tour of this site by a very enthusiastic young woman who majored in teaching history outside of the classroom. Lincoln and his family spent one-fourth of his term here, three miles away from the White House. The Sanctuary, or Old Soldier’s Home, has been enlarged with dormitories to accommodate 1,300 veterans. The stipulation for retirement there is that veterans have spent a minimum of 20 years in the service of our country.

After lunch we visited the National Museum of American History, newly opened after a two-year renovation. The exhibit is titled “Abraham Lincoln: An Extraordinary Life.” It was a great recap of much that we had learned from Alex on the trip and from his class on Lincoln.

Continuing our Lincoln Day, we viewed the “Life Masks of Lincoln” exhibit at the National Portrait Gallery. We also learned about the vice-presidents in an exhibit called “Presidents in Waiting,” exploring the office and the 14 individual vice-presidents who later became presidents.

We had a wonderful dinner at the Sequoia Restaurant in the Georgetown section of Washington and enjoyed a spectacular view from this two-story all-glass restaurant on the waterfront.

Sunday morning we concluded our Lincoln Day with a visit to the Lincoln Memorial. Once again, Alex Kramer gave us a history lesson on Lincoln’s two famous speeches, the Gettysburg Address and his second inaugural address, which we then read on the walls of the Memorial site. We learned how Lincoln used his oratorical skills and the presidency to preserve the Union. And in freeing the slaves, he left a legacy to freedom that is one of the most enduring American birthrights.

Next we visited the World War II Memorial that celebrates the generation of Americans who fought and won the most devastating war in world history.

Last, we visited the National Gallery of Art, where our Pittsburgh connection is Andrew W. Mellon, financier, art collector, and public servant, whose gift included his personal collection of old masters’ paintings and sculpture. The highlight was the new Luis Melendez exhibit, “Master of the Spanish Still Life.”

Totally exhausted, but culturally satiated, we left Washington, D.C., and returned home around 6:45 p.m. It was a wonderful weekend, and we thank you, Rose Marie!
Initial Impressions Can Be Deceiving: Getting to Know Our Study Leaders

By Sally Cohen, Curriculum Chair

Connecting with study leaders is a fascinating part of my job. Often I make “cold calls” or “cold emails” to people I don’t know and who have never taught for Osher at CMU. I may have learned about them from newspaper articles, or they might have been recommended by others who know their talents, and so I have ideas about course topics they could develop. However, communicating with them has revealed interesting surprises. Recently the following have come to mind:

- There are basic aspects of many of these people that I just don’t know. For instance—what they look like! When we were a smaller organization and had fewer classes, I visited new study leaders’ classrooms to get a better sense of the flavor of the courses and become a bit more familiar with the individuals. I still do some of this but can’t sit in on every new class. Curriculum Committee members, of course, share this responsibility.

- I do meet in person with many instructors to talk about course plans. But sometimes communication is strictly by email and phone. I always want to include phone contacts, because connecting “ear to ear” provides a different kind of discussion. During the personal phone interactions, I feel we get to know each other better, and I have a clearer sense of who this person is. In reality, though, I just know what some of the person’s ideas are and what he or she sounds like!

  Occasionally, when talking with someone on the phone, I get a sense of what that person could look like. However, this is usually very deceiving! I have found that when I meet these study leaders face-to-face, I usually am amazed, because they don’t look the way I envisioned them! The person who has led large, enthusiastic groups in a joint activity sounded tall with great stature—and was, in fact, short and petite. The person who runs several businesses is pleasant and direct on the phone and sounds as if he would dress more formally for work—actually appears very laid back and casual. The one who seems a bit timid and unsure is quite definite and organized in class.

- In addition, I find that I can be surprised by the courses study leaders choose to teach. For instance, some professionals have had extensive hobbies over the years and prefer to share this information with others. I am intrigued by the fact that many study leaders are retired engineers of one type or another, yet they teach courses in various aspects of business and in many artistic areas, such as theater, arts, raising flowers, wine-tasting, chess, film-making, and more.

  And then, we have retired medical doctors, dentists, and attorneys who have intense interest in and knowledge of music, history, art history, drama, and literature that they have translated into fascinating courses. There seems to be some relationship between the professional training of these individuals and their interest in the arts.

  Learning about the individuals who contribute to our program is an enriching experience. My only regret is that our interactions and personal relationships are usually limited.

  And so I say to study leaders whom I haven’t yet met in person, I feel we have made good connections, but I am very anxious to have those face-to-face introductions. Of course, I will always look forward to discovering the future surprises in study leaders’ interests and backgrounds that can ultimately be turned into stimulating courses.

What They’re Saying

“Dorothy has a generosity and vivaciousness that keeps the class humming. Long may she reign!”

Dorothy Shore “Stitching Is Bewitching”

“Fantastic—at any age or stage Rosa is wonderful!!”

Rosa Barnett Averbach “Downsizing”

Thanks

The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Carnegie Mellon thanks Frances and James Hardie for their gift of $100.
The Bea Jones Story

By Sylvia Sachs

Beatrice Jones must work with an outsized calendar and write entries very small in each box to keep track of her really busy, but well organized, lifestyle.

Well, actually, she keeps three calendars going, Bea admits, and “organize” is a big word in her vocabulary. In describing her work for a list of favorite organizations and causes, she often starts with, “I organize….”

Happily, Osher is high on that list. As anyone who has ever attended a Curriculum Committee meeting can attest, Bea is an invaluable sidekick to Sally Cohen, the chair. Any question that comes up at a meeting about a class, its attendance, its study leader, or whatever, Bea whips out a loose-leaf notebook and flips a few pages to the information. And on several Tuesdays or Wednesdays each month you can count on seeing a smiling, always attractively put-together Bea hard at work at the reception desk in the Osher office. Those are the two days she regularly reserves for Osher classes or helping chores.

Other important commitments have their slots on her calendar as well. She has many varied interests to which she devotes her energy. Mondays from 10:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. she volunteers at Ten Thousand Villages in Squirrel Hill. This is the charming gift shop that sells items made by needy artists in Third World countries. Bea does mostly office jobs there, admitting that she doesn’t like dealing with money. “I keep away from the cash register there, but I do like to chat with the people who come into the shop to look around,” she says.

Although Tuesdays and Wednesdays are her Osher days, she always includes flex time for other calls for help that turn up unexpectedly from a variety of her church or school-related activities.

Thursdays she regularly spends in the nursery school at her church, Shadyside Presbyterian, from 8:15 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. helping out with the three-year-olds. She’s a former elementary school teacher and you might expect that she has had enough time dealing with little children, but on the contrary she bubbles with enthusiasm describing these duties. “Working with three-year-olds? Oh, my gosh, what’s not to like? They are so full of life, so joyful, so open to everything. I love it.” Another favorite church-related activity is working with Sue Haney (also a member of Osher), chair of hospitality planning, thinking up fellowship events for members of the congregation.

No permanent commitments show up on her Friday schedule, but that doesn’t mean she isn’t doing something helpful and worthwhile on that or any other day she is called upon. She might be found on a Tuesday—the second one of every month—in the Bethlehem Haven in the Hill District. She and two other volunteers plan and prepare dinner events to cheer up the 40 or 50 women who might be living at the facility at the time.

Bea is a devoted supporter of the Neighborhood Academy in the Lark-

mer-Garfield area, a privately funded prep school for low-income students. She is committee chair for a group that organizes fund raising for student scholarships. Another well-known fund-raising event for which she works is the golf outing held every September for the Hosanna House in Wilkinsburg, a facility that provides all sorts of family-related services for Wilkinsburg folks.

While most of her volunteer duties are centered locally, Bea’s deep devotion to the work at Shadyside Presbyterian has, on occasion, lured her out of town. She went to Pearlington, Mississippi, to help people after the devastation of Hurricane Katrina. And two years in a row, she joined the church’s mission to paint and otherwise repair houses of the needy citizens of Mars Hill, North Carolina, an area in Appalachia (see page 1).

All is not work related, however, in the life of this many-faceted woman. She is a regular at the Heinz Hall Speaker series and a frequent symphony, ballet, and Public Theater attendee. She likes to shop, too, but keeps within the budget she has set as a retiree. A while back, a friend told her about a resale shop in Bloomfield, and she sometimes finds exceptional slightly used outfits there.

What They’re Saying

“I enjoyed this class—it made me reread Silent Spring just for starters. So much to think about!”

“Rachel Carson’s Environmental Ethics”
**Ad Lib**

By Sylvia Sachs

**Bob Dickman** had been planning to take his first skydive this coming April on his ninetieth birthday, but when he and his ever-serene wife, Gene, took a drive to check out Skydive Rick’s jumping site in Petersburg, Ohio, this past September 13, Bob thought, “Why wait?” It looked like such fun! Did Gene, who is used to her husband’s enthusiasm, make any objections? “She didn’t try to talk me out of it. She just said, ‘If you die, you die, but if you get injured, don’t expect me to take care of you,’ ” Bob said, laughing.

And so he got suited up, boarded the small plane with Jim Drummond, with whom he would jump in tandem, and with Jim’s wife, Cassie, who would be jumping just a bit ahead with her camera ready to videograph the whole experience. She did. Bob jumped and has the tape to prove it.

“The jump is 10,500 feet, and after Jim pulls the ripcord and the chute opens, it’s just a leisurely ride down,” says Bob. “You just have to be careful to hold your feet out so you come down on your butt. It’s really neat.”

**Norma Artman** heard about the skydive on one of her volunteer days in the office and immediately called the Dickmans for details. Norma is pretty adventurous herself, an admitted “risk taker,” and skydiving sounded like an activity she should add to her list of fun things to do in the future. She’s a constant traveler and is always eager to explore sites like the Greek Islands, or Australia/New Zealand, or off-the-beat places like Chokoloskee in the Florida Everglades. Her most recent daredeviling took place in August in Alaska.

Norma took her 12-year-old grandson Joshua Artman on an action-packed week to Alaska (and traveling alone with a 12-year-old is scary in itself). They got into zip harnesses that allowed them to be zoomed over treetops from platform to platform, getting gorgeous views of the icy landscape below. And after that they had to cautiously rappel down the rope for several minutes to reach the ground. They loved it!

“We had so much fun together. I loved it. I got so buzzed up over it,” says Norma. “One of our guides said, ‘You are one awesome grandmother.’ ”

But you don’t always have to leave town to find exciting happenings. On September 24 and 25, Pittsburgh had the G-20 meetings, which were worthy enough of attention from us stay-at-home folk and from a vast international audience as well.

And just before that event, on the Carnegie Mellon campus, the exciting new Gates and Hillman Buildings were dedicated. Both Bill Gates and Henry Hillman spoke at the ceremony, and **Gloriana St. Clair**, dean of CMU university libraries, secretary of Osher’s board of directors—and a study leader as well—was one of those in the invited audience.

Henry Hillman joked that his longtime residence was just on the edge of the CMU campus, and now that he had a building right on the campus, his next move might be right into President Cohon’s office. How about coming into the Osher office—he’d be very welcome.

“Bill Gates spoke about how his philanthropies are selected and referred to his wife Melissa’s special interest in education,” said Gloriana, “and he answered questions from students. One way the Gates Foundation has helped libraries, in particular, has been to give computers to libraries all over the U.S., libraries that wouldn’t have been able to afford them otherwise.”

Of course, that activity is close to Gloriana’s heart.

**Shirley Tucker** recently became an ambassador for one of the largest travel companies in the world. The educational travel organization was once called Elderhostel, but recently changed the name to **Exploritas**—explore + veritas (Latin for truth). As a volunteer, Shirley offers free presentations to groups of any kind—for example, a chess club, a birding group, or even a group of neighbors. If your organization needs a speaker, Shirley will design a presentation to fit the needs of the group.

Millie Lynch, Osher’s gimlet-eyed senior administrative coordinator, can spot an Osher

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AD Lib
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member’s name in print no matter how deeply it is buried in a publication. She collects them for this column, and quite a stack accumulates in the months between issues. Here are a few of the more recent ones:

The Sunday, July 11, Tribune-Revenue carried an excellent story about the Rodef Shalom Biblical Botanical Garden created by our member Irene Jacob. Also quoted was member Florence Herrup, who is a volunteer hostess at the garden.

The July 19 Pittsburgh Tribune-Review quoted Mary Alice Gorman in an excellent article on the rewards of lifelong reading.

The July 23 Post-Gazette included a story about residents of the Metropolitan, an upscale condo in Shadyside, who prepared and served a meal at Family House for a man who was about to have surgery. A large, colorful photo of the “cooks” included Osher member Marilyn Meltzer.

Osher study leaders Charley Humphre and Heather McElwee were part of a big story in the August 9 Tribune-Review on the Pittsburgh Glass Center.

A two-page story in the August 16 Post-Gazette about the Pressed Steel Car strike in McKees Rocks 100 years ago quoted labor historian Charles McColl Estor, who is an Osher study leader.

A September 7 article in the Tribune Review described a walk around Oakmont and made a stop in the Mystery Lovers Bookstore, run by study leader Mary Alice Gorman.

On Sunday, September 27, the Tribune Review mentioned painter Jane Haskell, an Osher study leader, and states that she will be an artist in the Westmoreland Art Museum Permanent Collection. Jane is teaching a class on “Cezanne’s Legacy” this fall.

A letter to the editor by member Joan Morse Gordon ran in the Pittsburgh Post Gazette September 3 commenting on the proposed national health legislation. Osher lectures chair and physician Jeanne Hanchett wrote on the same topic October 18.

Study leader Mahnaz Harrison was mentioned in the Herald newspaper (Allegheny Valley) on September 3 for a speech she was scheduled to give in Fox Chapel on her life in Iran.

Ice Cream Social Celebrates Volunteers
By Filomena Conti

Saturday, August 1, a beautiful summer day! What better way for Osher’s study leaders and volunteers to spend the afternoon than at Osher’s ice cream social in the atrium of the Schatz Faculty Dining Room on the CMU campus. This annual event recognizes those members of the Osher organization. We know who the study leaders are; the volunteers work in the office, aid the study leaders, and serve as committee chairs, committee members, and board officers. They give their time and make Osher at Carnegie Mellon the great success it is.

Those who attended enjoyed various flavors of ice cream, with all kinds of fixings, as well as a variety of delicious cookies. Following a comprehensive speech by Osher President Julian Eligater about our organization’s accomplishments, we were entertained by the Note 4 Note barbershop quartet. This professional group included longtime Osher member Frank Allison. Judging from the buzz and laughter in the room, we can only conclude that one and all enjoyed a happy summer afternoon.
Punxy, Phil, and Indiana, PA: Another Great Day!
By Gene Dickman

July 16, 2009. Fifty-one of us boarded our giant bus at the Circle at CMU and departed promptly at 8:30 a.m. Muffins on the way got us off to a good start. About two hours later, we met the 124-year old Punxsy Phil, his girlfriend, and his handler, Ben Hughes, who educated us with the history and fables of Phil. It was good to know that he is still sexually active.

Next stop was Gobbler’s Knob, where on February 2 at 7 a.m. every year, about 10,000 people gather to learn whether we’ll have six more weeks of winter or whether spring weather is just around the corner. The Punxsutawney Historical and Genealogical Society’s Lattimer and Bennis Houses were next, complete with tours viewing the vintage rooms, displays of period architecture, furniture, costumes, and historical artifacts from early Groundhog Day celebrations.

A fabulous meal was served and enjoyed at the Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP) Academy of Culinary Arts! Chef Martha Jo Rupert and her white-gloved staff of third-year students cooked and served a five-course luncheon at tables of four, six, or eight. The menu was “knock your socks off” diverse. It included your choice of several “faux” red or white still wines, sparkling wine or juices, various breads and butters, six appetizers, two salads, eight entrees, six desserts, and more kinds of coffees than Starbucks. Everyone was having such a good time, it was difficult to get the group back on the bus, and we were 45 minutes late arriving at our next stop—the Jimmy Stewart Museum in Indiana, Pa. But the time on the bus passed quickly listening to Elaine Light tell of how she left Pittsburgh and came to spend 41 years in Punxsutawney. (Elaine’s role in Punxsutawney and her involvement in the establishment of the culinary academy at IUP was described in Ad Lib in the Winter-Spring 2009 issue of It’s All Talk.)

Chris Collins, the Jimmy Stewart impersonator, treated us to a fine performance of George Bailey of “It’s a Wonderful Life,” the beloved holiday classic. Then half the group remained in the theater area to see a documentary of Stewart’s life while the other half toured the several galleries of his early life, his military life, his married life, and his film career. His many citations, awards, and costumes plus re-creations of his boyhood room and Los Angeles office were on display. Of course, turnabout was only fair, and the procedure was reversed, making for a very full, fun, and long day.

The wine and cheese on the homeward bus revived the flagging passengers, and when we returned to CMU at 7:15 p.m., everyone agreed it was a great trip. Who knew there was so much to do in those little towns?

Sixteenth Annual Food Drive Nov. 2-13
By Joe Scorpion

Carnegie Mellon University will launch its sixteenth annual Food Drive early in November. This is one the largest private food drives in the area. Last year a total of 6,227 pounds of nonperishable items were collected and contributed to the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank. For the past several years our Osher program has participated in this drive with our members generously donating nonperishable food items, paper products, toiletries, etc., as well as money.

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. Cardboard cartons will be set up for collection at these sites. Watch for notices! Hopefully, with the help of our Osher members, the university can exceed last year’s totals.

Many thanks to those members who made cash contributions at the evening lecture on October 6. As a result, we were able to donate a total of $306 to this year’s drive.
Whirlwind Weekend of Culture
By Gene Dickman

Bob Dickman (day trips) and RoseMarie DeRiso (overnight trips) teamed up for a sensational weekend to Cleveland, Cayahoga Falls, and Chatauqua August 22 and 23.

We started at the Cleveland Museum of Art with a quick lunch and a docent-led tour of the new East Wing. We had an overview of the beautiful $350 million expansion plan and then a quick look at the collections of Rodin sculpture, the Impressionists, Cubist and Contemporary Art, and Photography.

After a quick check-in at our hotel, we had a fabulous dinner at one of Cleveland’s landmark restaurants, Sergio’s.

On to the Blossom Festival, summer home of the Cleveland Orchestra, featuring the inimitable Joffrey Ballet Company. We had A+ seating in the covered shed, capacity 5,700, with seating for another 13,500 on the lawn. The Joffrey program featured five signature pieces that left all 32 of us mesmerized with the dancers’ strength, skill, and grace. The dancers, choreography and costumes were positively breathtaking, and we came away feeling so fortunate and privileged to have seen them.

You’re supposed to rest on Sunday, but not this group. We boarded the bus to the Chautauqua Institution and in between the raindrops, we had an hour’s tour with a very knowledgeable guide who gave us the history of the Institute—walking so we'd be sure to appreciate the delicious luncheon at the Athenaeum Hotel.

The afternoon’s entertainment in the Amphitheater was a performance of the Barbershop Harmony Parade featuring a group of 18 young men (average age 17 years), senior men, and a female quartet. The youngsters were great, and it was refreshing to see them enjoying an “old time” activity instead of the rock and roll we associate with young people.

Our 4 o’clock departure left at 5 p.m., and a tired but happy group arrived at CMU at 8 o’clock.

“In the Waves,” Paul Gauguin 1889, is one of the features of Osher at CMU’s next visit to the Cleveland Museum of Art on November 7 to view the current exhibit, “Paul Gauguin, Paris 1889.” This landmark exhibition gathers about 100 paintings, works on paper, woodcarvings, and ceramics by Paul Gauguin and his contemporaries to explore how the artist created his signature style during the year 1889.

This Isn’t You, Is It?
By Filomena Conti

Hi, Margo, I missed you in class today.

Oh, hello, Andy. I didn’t attend class today because Macy’s was having a sale and I decided to shop instead.

I’m sorry to hear that because I understand that a lot of persuasion was used to get our study leader for this class. You know, Margo, our study leaders give freely of their time and subject knowledge for these classes; plus, now that our membership has greatly increased, there is usually a waiting list of members wanting to join a class.

I’m sorry to hear that, Andy, but I know of members who do miss classes.

That’s right, Margo, but when a member finds it necessary to miss a class, he or she should let the study leader assistant or the registrar’s office know.

Also, if a member expects several absences, he or she shouldn’t register for the class. I know that after committing to a class and attending the first class, a member may recognize that this is not a subject he or she is interested in. That’s okay. The student should promptly notify the registrar’s office. That way an opportunity can be given to the next person on the waiting list.

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Having a Ball at The Absolute Ballroom

By Jayne Keffer

We could have danced all night. Well, maybe all afternoon. That’s how it was on Wednesday, June 3, when 45 Osher at CMU members and guests spent their afternoon at the Absolute Ballroom on Hamilton Avenue in Pittsburgh.

It all began with a lunch catered by the luncheon committee. (A first time for the committee, and according to all guests, a huge success.) Lunch included smoked turkey or vegetable wraps, tossed salad, watermelon, cheesecake with fresh strawberries, a piece of Godiva chocolate, and soft drinks.

After lunch, the real fun began. Andrew, a CMU graduate and our very charming dance instructor, along with Amanda, his dance partner, initially showed us how easy ballroom dancing can be. As he and Amanda glided across the floor in sync every step they took, we were mesmerized. It did not end there.

“It’s easy,” Andrew assured us. After scanning the ballroom, he chose Carol Wolsh to be his partner to demonstrate dancing to us. According to Carol, she has two left feet. You should have seen how gracefully she danced across the floor with Andrew as her partner.

We were content to enjoy watching Carol keep up with Andrew as they moved along the dance floor. But it soon became our turns. We were invited, and encouraged, to go to the dance floor, find a partner, and try our newly taught skills.

Whether we implemented our new skills or just shuffled along the floor, we all enjoyed the thrill of being ballroom dancers for the day. Everyone was on the dance floor at one time as there was plenty of space to try out our fancy moves.

Time passed too quickly, and before long it was time to go. Could we have danced all afternoon? Just ask anyone who was there that afternoon.

I thank my committee members for all their hard work and good suggestions. They include Dee Davis (who inspired us to believe that we could easily cater this event), Carol Wolsh, Jane Prantl, and Jennifer Franz. Thanks also to those anonymous guests who pitched in to set up the tables, serve drinks, and help with cleanup.

Far left, Andrew and Amanda; left, Andrew and Carole Wolsh demonstrate the cha-cha; above, Sarah and Norman Clark

Photos by Millie Lynch

What They’re Saying

“I thought the course was excellent. I started out thinking that content would be too technical. Prof. Cohen presented in such a way that I came to understand the rules of radiation.”

Bernard Cohen—“The Benefits and Risks of Nuclear Energy”
The Houses of Madison County

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County. Rev. Todd E. Leach, who now serves as associate pastor for missions at Shadyside Presbyterian Church, was the director of missions for Media Presbyterian Church when the nonprofit organization was being established. In summer 2008 Rev. Leach led a small assessment team to Mars Hill, N.C., for a week to see if this mission trip would interest the Shadyside Presbyterian Church congregation. We worked alongside a group from Media Presbyterian Church and a group from the Burlington, Iowa, Presbyterian Church.

We were divided into small teams. The intergenerational team I was assigned to worked on Bob’s house. We put in a new floor and a wood-burning stove. During the week together we enjoyed a special bond with Bob and with each other. When we returned to Pittsburgh, we were all very enthusiastic about the experience, and we encouraged our congregation to send a larger group of workers in 2009.

This summer (July 12-17) Rev. Todd Leach led a group of over 70 people to Mars Hill for one week. The group included people from Shadyside Presbyterian Church and from the churches in Sewickley and Burlington, Iowa. We were ten teams of intergenerational workers with various skill levels, from all walks of life.

Some teams worked on painting houses. Some teams worked on roofing, while other teams worked on flooring. Flowers were planted in a front yard by one team. Even a ramp and a deck were built. The very young children got involved by visiting a nursing home in the area. Getting to know the home owners and each other was a true blessing.

We stayed at Myers Dormitory at Mars Hill College. Every morning when we walked to the cafeteria we saw the majestic Appalachian Mountains and seemingly endless rows of tall green trees. The beauty of the area was breathtaking.

We worked hard, but we also had a chance to relax. Wednesday afternoon we were free to explore the many sights in the area. The teens went whitewater rafting and horseback riding. Thursday night we went to nearby Hot Springs, had a great dinner and were entertained by a country-western duo. A few went to the natural hot tubs at the nearby springs.

After our evening worship services, small groups gathered on the porch and in the dorm to play games, talk, and laugh together. The young and the young at heart also enjoyed ice cream at the shop on campus.

It was wonderful to meet and work with people from Madison County. They live their lives with extraordinary courage, spirit, and grace. The Madison County Mission experience has reinforced my belief that when we go beyond the superficial, the people who appear very different from us actually may have a lot in common with us. We share the love of family and friends, the love of land and home. We strive to face our fears and to overcome the obstacles in our lives.

I slept and dreamed that life was happiness.
I awoke and saw that life was service.
I served and found in service happiness is found.

Rabindranath Tagore

This Isn’t You, Is It?

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As a matter of fact, Margo, there was a class I was not initially able to attend, but because someone canceled, I was accepted and I am thoroughly enjoying the class. This is making the most of the resources available to Osher members.

Andy, I did not realize that. We’re fortunate to have so many study leaders who give generously of their talents. In the future, I will read the descriptions in the Osher catalog more closely and sign up for classes I am really interested in attending. I see how diligently the Curriculum Committee and the registrar’s office work to give Osher members opportunities for class participation.

That’s great, Margo, see you in class.
Office Tidbits by Millie Lynch, Senior Administrative Coordinator

- Please read your emails regularly. In addition to announcements about events, emails are often sent concerning your classes.
- If you change your Internet service provider, please let us know so that we can update your contact information.
- Please do not discard your course catalogs and confirmation letters until the term has ended.
- As the weather turns colder, classes may be canceled. We post our closings on the three major television networks: KDKA, WTAE, and WPXI. If the weather is awful, please tune into one of those stations. If the Pittsburgh Public Schools are closed, Osher at Carnegie Mellon is closed. If the Public Schools are delayed by one hour, our classes will be held on the normal schedule. Additionally, there may be times when the Public Schools are open and we decide to cancel classes because we feel the weather conditions are dangerous. When this happens, the telephone trees set up in your classes are activated, and you should receive a call at home about class cancellations.
- We have a great website. There is a calendar that lists all of our events. There are also photographs of all of the evening lectures, luncheons, meetings, etc. Take a look at: www.cmu.edu/osher
- While you’re surfing the web, glance at the Osher National Resource Center’s published authors’ page. Many of our study leaders and members have published books that are listed on their site at: http://usm.maine.edu/olli/national/links/olli_authors.jsp
- Some trivia: In what areas did most of our members work? The majority of members in my un-scientific study were teachers (205). The next four largest professions were business people (135), physicians (66), professors and nurses (45).