Bob Dickman Remembers to Live Every Day

By Joan Morse Gordon

High on his right arm in small square letters is a tattoo, MEMENTO VIVIRE (Latin for Remember to Live), and Bob Dickman lives up to his reminder every day. During a given week he will have played tennis three times, golf once, worked out twice with his trainer at Club One, attended Osher classes, planned an Osher day trip, and gone to dinner or theater with his wife, Gene, and old or new friends. Not an active schedule? I think probably yes, if you recently celebrated your 90th birthday.

This erect white-haired native Pittsburgher, while saving money for college, started working at 17 for Gardner Displays, a local company that designed and built exhibits for trade shows, automobile shows, and world fairs, with four years off to serve during World War II as a chief yeoman on the subchaser PC 1181 in the U.S. Navy. With no college experience, he was not eligible for officer training.

In 1950, Bob and some associates started their own display company. By 1967 he was president, and in 1974 they were bought out by an English firm. He had planned to leave in four years but stayed with the company until 1995 (Gene calls him an “exhibitionist”), when he joined then-A.L.L., his modus of adjustment to retirement.

To celebrate his 90th birthday Bob decided to equal former President George H. W. Bush’s feat by parachute jumping with Sky Dive Rick in a tandem jump near Beaver. His good friends Rabbi Aaron Bisno and his wife, Michelle, came along to watch jump training and join the tailgate party afterwards, and maybe to pray.

Included on what Gene calls his “bucket” or “to do” list were a 30-minute glider flight with the Pittsburgh Soaring Club in a two-passenger glider; a ride down the 1056-foot zip line on the ski lift at Nemacolin, where the Dickmans have a condo; a motorcycle-training class at CCAC (fell with bike)

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6 Weeks + 3 Plays = One Fun Class

By Leslie Evans

It was 6:55 p.m. on June 9. Study Leader and playwright Dr. C. R. Thomas realized that sound technician Gretta Donnick, coming in from the North Hills, was missing in action. Waiting in the wings, the actors—Osher students in the class “Have You Ever Wanted to Act on Stage?”—heard a car crash in the Friends Meeting House parking lot. Crunched car metal outside, and no sound equipment inside. Yikes, the drama started without us!

No one was hurt except cars, and Gretta finally broke free of the Stage?”—heard a car crash in the Friends Meeting House parking lot. Crunched car metal outside, and no sound equipment inside. Yikes, the drama started without us!

No one was hurt except cars, and Gretta finally broke free of the

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From the President
By Betsy Martin

Many of you have been, are, or will be on vacation when this newsletter arrives. Others will be attending summer classes at CMU—when the parking is easy. One of the midsummer events Osher volunteers look forward to is the ice cream social, which will be held in the Shatz dining room in the University Center on Saturday, July 31. At the social we honor all volunteers—our great study leaders, their assistants, our desk and office help, and our governing board.

New members may not know that all our teachers are volunteers, and the only tangible reward they receive, other than an ice cream sundae, is a gift card from Barnes and Noble. Aren’t we fortunate to have such a dedicated group of people who make this organization so successful!

Summer is also the time for two of our popular overnight trips organized by RoseMarie DeRiso: one to the Shaw Festival at Niagara on-the-Lake, July 20-23, and the other to the Chautauqua Institute, August 23-27. There’s also a trip to the Blossom Festival in Cleveland combined with a visit to Chautauqua August 14-15. What wonderful options Osher offers to make our summers more enjoyable, and educational!

If you haven’t tried a trip yet, there is still space and time to make reservations for fall visits to New England October 17-23 (note the change of date) and/or a cultural tour of the Big Apple, November 8-11. See the country and make new friends!

I will look forward to seeing you back in class in September. I know by name just a small percentage of Osher’s 1800+ members, but I hope to get to know more of you. Please call the office or me with any concerns you may have, be they suggestions, complaints, or compliments.

Tutoring Excites New Member
By Rosalyn Treger

Joining Osher brought new member Roberta (Bobbie) Marks back to school in more ways than she had anticipated. At the holiday luncheon last December, someone at her table mentioned volunteering as a tutor at Pittsburgh Colfax K-8. Bobbie’s interest was aroused. She’d taught elementary school some 50 years ago, and from third through sixth grades she’d been a pupil at Colfax herself.

She called the school, completed the paperwork for the necessary clearances, and began helping in a first grade class one morning a week. Sometimes directed by the teacher, sometimes figuring out what to do on her own, she helped out in many ways—checking homework, reviewing words and sounds, occasionally taking a struggling group out to the hall to work with reading and writing, helping to keep them on track. She formed warm relationships with the teacher and the kids; sometimes there were hugs for “Mrs. Marks.”

As the school year wound down, Bobbie wrote: “As the last day arrives, I am realizing how lost I will be over the summer. I can’t begin to describe the enjoyment I have had and how much it was appreciated by the teacher and students. However, I will be back there as soon as school starts in the fall.”

“Not only have I enjoyed this experience, but I realize how much the school has appreciated my assistance. There is definitely a need for more volunteers. I encourage anyone to contact the school and enjoy this rewarding experience. Volunteers can assist with music classes, art classes, or any other activities that relate to your background.”

Would You Like to Tutor?

Osher member Carol Wolsh, a Colfax alum herself, has tutored at Colfax for 16 years. For several years, she recruited A.L.L./Osher member tutors, but there haven’t been very many lately, and she would love to revive members’ interest in this very rewarding activity. If you’re interested, call the Osher office at 412 268-7489 or Colfax K-8 at 412 422-3525.
History from the Bootstraps: A Memorable Tour

By Millie Lynch

It was a cold day and rain was expected on April 17, but the weather did not deter a busload of Osher members and guests who made reservations for the “History from the Bootstraps Tour of Braddock, McKees Rocks and Millvale.” The yellow school bus was so full that two people ended up following the bus in their car.

The excitement surrounding the tour was sparked by the reputation of our tour leader, Dr. Charles McCollester, a retired professor from Indiana University with a solid history and work experience in the local labor movement. He is the president of the Battle of Homestead Foundation and, lucky for us, an Osher study leader. He is also the author of the recently published book *The Point of Pittsburgh*.

Our first stop was the former industrial town of Braddock, which for those who had not been through Braddock for a while was quite a shocker; in fact, the town resembled an abandoned war zone, with just little flickers of hope visible amidst the destruction. We passed by many boarded-up buildings, the community garden, and the now-closed Braddock Hospital.

(Luckily, I was able to get a brief glimpse of the vibrantly colorful Robert Qualters’ artwork recently installed outside the senior citizens center).

We stopped at the gates of the Edgar Thomson Steel Mill, where Dr. McCollester told us about the mill being Andrew Carnegie’s first. Still spewing smoke, the mill was near the site of the 1755 Battle of the Monongahela, an area visible from the gates; a 1916 May Day march/shootout; and a 1919 steel strike.

Our next stop was the Carnegie Library in Braddock. Unfortunately, the weather had knocked out the power, so our tour was limited, but Executive Director Victoria Vargo talked to us about the history of the

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Business and Pleasure at Osher Annual Meeting

By Rosalyn Treger

Ninety-six members gathered at the 20th Century Club in Oakland on April 23 for the Osher at Carnegie Mellon Annual Meeting that combined business and entertainment.

After outgoing President Julian Eligator and Treasurer Fritz Okie presented reports and were warmly thanked for their outstanding services, members discussed and voted on bylaw amendments. Two amendments relating to the organization’s qualification for tax-exempt status were approved without dissent. After vigorous discussion of an amendment dealing with admission of members, the amendment was tabled with recommendations that the board come back with another amendment for admitting study leaders and their significant others without regard to the waiting list.

Election of officers and board members followed: Betsy Martin, president; Gloria Kleiman, vice president; Jan Davis, secretary; Joe Shirk, treasurer, and Julian Eligator, past president. Ann Austin, Gloria Bodek, Stephanie Birnberg, Alan Colker, Jan Davis, Elissa Hirsh, and Gloria Kleiman were elected to first terms as directors. Alan Ackerman and Filomena Conti were elected to second terms as directors.

After the business meeting, members enjoyed refreshments at the tea table and a delightful performance by singer Anna Singer, accompanied by Mark Carver of the CMU School of Music.

Above, Anna Singer performing; right, Ruth Westerman speaks about bylaw.
How the Curriculum Committee Makes Beautiful Music
By Beatrice Jones

As I write this on June 14, my fall catalog arrived yesterday. The Curriculum Committee will be meeting on June 22 (the first full day of summer) and on June 28, to start planning for the Winter/Spring 2011 term. Our committee members find it a challenge to think about winter in the summer, but we must plan ahead. How do we keep it all straight? We have Sally Cohen, our incomparable chair, guide, and conductor.

When I tell people about working with Sally and the Curriculum Committee, they usually offer suggestions for courses and study leaders. Then they ask how they can become members. I have learned a lot working with Sally for seven years. I have learned to find a connection to curriculum development in almost every situation. I have discussed our program with people waiting in line at the Pittsburgh Speaker Series at Heinz Hall, the volunteers at the Ten Thousand Villages store in Squirrel Hill, the staff and teachers at the Shadyside Presbyterian Church nursery school, and with the ladies at my hair salon! I spoke to women I met at the Women’s Health and the Environment Conference, sponsored by Teresa Heinz, in April at the Convention Center. I contacted some of the panelists at the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette Town Meeting on the Civil Rights movement in February at the August Wilson Center, to see if they were interested in becoming study leaders. There are opportunities to find new study leaders and new courses in many places and in all four seasons.

Vivaldi’s “Four Seasons” provokes many different emotions. The music can make you feel calm one minute and elated the next. Working behind the scenes, the Curriculum Committee members feel a wide variety of emotions too! We start out very excited, looking forward to finding wonderful study leaders and new courses. We may experience anxiety wondering whether the proposals from the study leaders will arrive before the deadline. When the forms start coming in, we are happy and relieved. During the last few days before the one-page forms are due, the level of activity can best be described by the musical term allegro. It’s nonstop action! The office staff, Sally, and I are making phone calls, emailing, faxing, copying, and filing.

We can move from allegro to adagio only after the proposal forms are in and the catalog is ready for printing. Then adagio turns to allegro again because we repeat the process for the next term. Sally, like most conductors, seldom rests. She strives for excellence, sets the bar high, and leads by example.

Musicians playing together in harmony make beautiful music. Like a great orchestra, we have many talented, hardworking people helping. Sally and I couldn’t do it without them. We thank the study leaders and their assistants; the members of the Curriculum Committee; Millie Lynch, Mary Cay Burke-Hamill, Phyllis Davidson, Janet Davis, and Roz Treger for working together in harmony.

Our reward comes when the catalog is completed and we hear “Bravo!” from a happy member. We also hear “Encore!” So Sally picks up her baton again, and we prepare for another term regardless of the season outside our windows.

Fall Evening Lectures

Tuesday, September 28
Rev. Thomas Johnson, co-founder and head of the Neighborhood Academy: “Educating the Urban Poor.”

Wednesday, October 13
John Carson, the Regina and Marlin Miller Professor and head of the School of Art at Carnegie Mellon will speak on “Art on the CMU Campus.” Before the lecture, there will be a guided tour of campus art.
**Art in the Great Depression**  
*By Gene Dickman*

Friday, March 19. What a day this has been, what a rare day it’s been! Sunshine, and the livin’ is easy for the 43 of us who boarded the big yellow school bus for a day of PWAP—exhibits of the Public Works Art Project. PWAP was a seven-month program from December 1933 through June 1934 that federally funded 3,750 artists who produced 15,600 artworks at a cost of $1,312,000. Its purpose was to give unemployed artists pride and respectability while they showcased their impressions of American life.

We started at the Frick Art and Historical Center on Reynolds Street in Pittsburgh. Sarah Hall, curatorial director, gave an enlightening 40-minute oral and visual lecture prior to the extremely knowledgeable docent-led tour through the exhibition “1934—A New Deal for Artists.” Fifty-five paintings from the collection of the Smithsonian American Art Museum provided a composite portrait of America during the Depression. They depicted people, rural life, urban life, and industry. Seven works on display were chosen by the Roosevelts to hang in the White House.

Before getting back on the bus, we stopped at the Car and Carriage Museum, where we saw the three vehicles of 1934 vintage that illustrated automobile production and use during one of the most difficult times in American history.

At noon, our big yellow bus took us to the Greensburg Country Club where we had a delightful and generous luncheon in a gracious and relaxed atmosphere. Our frugal tour director, Bob Dickman, instead of arranging for BYOB, arranged for BYOC (cookies from Costco).

Full and happy, we boarded the bus bound for the Westmoreland Museum of Art to see the Julian Schoen Collection—“Concerning the 1930’s in Art,” a perfect companion to the exhibit at the Frick. These works were smaller, but still of the same genre.

Also at the Westmoreland, we were exposed to a small but interesting exhibit explained by the artist himself, Ben Schachter, professor of art at St. Vincent’s College in Latrobe. His exhibit was titled, “Kosher/Treif and Eruvim.” He explained the meaning of these Jewish religious terms and how he used his skill and paint to capture these concepts symbolically. It was an eye-opener for our mixed group of Jewish and non-Jewish members.

The bus departed at 4 p.m., the ride home lasting just long enough for our cocktail repast.

Kudos to Bob and assistant Ed Landerman for a beautiful day.

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**The Indy 500**  
*By Joe Scorpion*

It all began in 1911 on a Memorial Day weekend when Ray Harroun, driving the “Marmon Wasp,” completed the 500-mile course with a winning average speed of 74.6 miles per hour. Since then it has grown to be the “Greatest Spectacle in Racing,” when each May, 33 drivers gather to challenge the two-and-one-half mile oval track.

The excitement and anticipation builds for the 350,000 fans assembled and culminates with a tumultuous roar when they hear the command to start the race: “Ladies and gentlemen, start your engines.” The race cars move out slowly as they circle the track for two warm-up laps, awaiting the green flag to signal the start of another 500-mile contest. Then it’s speed, endurance, tactics, and a good pit crew that will determine the winner.

I attended my first race in 1963, when Parnelli Jones won, and have been in attendance each May for over 40 years. Next year they will celebrate the 100th anniversary of this event. Tucked inside those years are the great memories of exciting finishes, shattered dreams, driver failures, and the joy of the crowd.

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**Chicago Charms**  
*By Marilyn McDevitt Rubin*

Happy as I am to be home, I still remember with pleasure my visit to Chicago and its many urban pleasures, city tours, and river cruises.

*Continued on page 7*
Everyone enjoys a story about someone’s big bargain, and Mary Sciulli’s tale about her $1 trip to New York City sure caught the attention of her fellow workers in the Osher office one day this past June. Mary made the trip on the Megabus, which none of her listeners knew about at the time. (It has since received a little more publicity, but is not too well-known.)

“I saw a little item about it in the Post-Gazette a couple of months ago, reporting that Megabus was going to start up in Pittsburgh,” explained Mary. “I knew I was going to New York in mid-May, so I took down the website information and investigated it.”

She found out how the Chicago-based company operates and keeps its costs so low. All reservations are made online, and all pickups are made streetside, eliminating the need for terminal buildings. As departure dates get closer and buses begin to fill up, prices go up incrementally to $5, $8, and so on until, Mary thinks, to $20 tops. Mary ordered her ticket very early and even got a second $1 ticket for a friend who would be in Pittsburgh and ready to return to his New York residence at that time.

“We picked up the coach Downtown at 10th Street and Penn near the Convention Center,” Mary said. “It was a great big blue double-decker bus. It was a beautiful bus, and there were comfortable reclining seats. It also has free wireless Internet and power outlets. It was not crowded when we went on a Tuesday . . . there were some students on board. I think lots of students know about Megabus and they use it a lot. We sat on the upper deck and really enjoyed the trip. The New York stop was at 7th Avenue and 28th Street, near Penn Station and the theater district.”

Will Mary Sciulli use Megabus again even if she doesn’t get a $1 ticket? She says she will and plans to schedule rides around theater trips, especially Wednesday matinees.

In any gathering of Osher members, just ask, “Does anyone have a grandchild doing something unusual this summer?” You can count on a positive reply. At Al Kosmal’s last cooking class, Gloria Bodek asked if it was interesting that her granddaughter, Zoe Silberblatt, a senior at Winchester Thurston, was joining a circus for the summer. Yes, that definitely qualified as interesting!

It turns out that performing has been a longtime dream of Zoe’s. She is a gymnast and has had special training on the hanging rope, which was helpful when she went to Vermont to audition for the circus job. In fact, she had persuaded her dad to drive her to Philadelphia for many weekend lessons on the techniques needed to perform from the hanging rope. With that training under her belt, she searched the Internet for opportunities to perform. She found a small nonprofit called Circus Smirkus, which travels throughout New England giving shows to raise money for charitable causes. She went to Vermont to audition for a job and was accepted. Now she is on the job as a member of the troupe.

“Isn’t that kind of a dangerous ‘sport’ for Zoe?” I asked her grand-

And then there’s Mary Lane Salsbury, who can usually be counted on for an interesting conversational tidbit. However, on June 15 she was too busy for more than a few comments on the phone. She and her daughter Kate from Australia were busy packing for Mary Lane’s imminent move to Squirrel Hill. But it was June 15, the date memorialized in James Joyce’s Ulysses and celebrated every year as Bloomsday. A dedicated Joyce fan, Mary Lane dropped packing right away so she and Kate could go to join the celebration.

Even the most agile and experienced gardener can trip once in a while, as did Sue Neff. While rearranging plants in her backyard, she tripped and fell against her porch, breaking her arm. But nothing stopped Sue. A couple weeks later, arm in cast, she took off for New York and a convention of Origami experts. Origami is one of Sue’s interests and talents, along with gardening, that she shares as an Osher study leader.

Earlier in the spring, Sue spent three exciting weeks in France visiting
Ad Lib

a former college roommate and enjoying a week in Provence. The walled town called Bonnvieux fascinated her, as did an Arab marketplace outside of Paris. She was overwhelmed with the colors and sounds and people of the marketplace. It won’t be surprising if some of this beauty works its way into her own future artwork.

An inveterate traveler like Marilyn McDevitt Rubin wouldn’t let a little thing like a volcano change her plans to visit Iceland. She and her friend, Gene Deskin, joined a group of ten there in mid-June and had a gorgeous week touring what she describes as a “magical country.” She loved the people, the towns, and the striking variety of natural beauty.

An alert from member and study leader Jim Gatto: “Several times at CMU I have had students on bicycles come very close to hitting me.” Bikers weaving in and out of foot traffic sometimes approach from behind and we don’t hear them until they’re past us. Jim warns, “If one of our members happens to veer off to the side for some reason (tripping, deciding to change his/her route, etc.), a serious injury may result.”

Any careful reader of the local press (like Mary Cay Burke-Hamill and Millie Lynch in the office) will see mentions of Osher members. Here are some of the ones recently clipped:

The week before Father’s Day, the Post-Gazette printed a number of readers’ recollections of happy times spent with their fathers. One was from Ronna Edelstein, who wrote lovingly of the summer of 1960 when she and her father spent many happy days in the bleachers at Forbes Field. Yes, they were there the unforgettable day when Bill Mazeroski’s home run defeated the Yankees and won the World Series. Ronna wrote that the memories of that day “intensify with each passing year.”

From the June 29 Tribune-Review: a long article called “Talk Is Treasure” features an interview with Karen Yee, a popular study leader. The article is about Americans who have begun to study the languages originally spoken by their parents or grandparents who came to this country and took up English. In Karen’s case, her parents planned to send their children back to China for high school so they would be proficient in Chinese, but the Communists came to power and this plan was given up. Now, 40 years later, Karen is learning Mandarin with her granddaughter Reilly Caslin, 4, and her sister, Lauren, 6, at the Tzu Chi Academy at the South Hills Middle School in Beechview.

The Post-Gazette’s June 6 SEEN page carried a picture of members Edward O. Wilson and Patricia DeMarco in relation to their work for the Rachel Carson Celebration of Biodiversity and Irene Jacob, an Osher member and study leader, and her husband, Rabbi Walter Jacob, for work with the Jewish Association on Aging.

The Post-Gazette’s May 29 Letters to the Editor carried a letter from Edith and Errol Miller on the possible sale of WDUQ. Also very much involved in this station’s survival is Charlie Humphrey, who sometimes teaches Osher classes about mind-boggling technology.

A very long article, “About Faces,” in the May 2 Post-Gazette referred to Marlene Behrmann’s study on brain circuit problems. Marlene is a long-time, much-admired Osher study leader. On June 22, a letter by Lincoln Wolfenstein criticized government secrecy about civilian killings in Baghdad. On June 27, member and study leader Gerst Gibbon wrote about the need to effectively regulate the recovery, transportation, and use of fossil fuels, which, he said, we will need to use for a long time.

Chicago Charms

Continued from page 5

The Art Institute has a new wing, and inside, looking north through a glass wall, there is a view of Millennium Park and the Frank Gehry Pavilion that just knocks your socks off.

A short bus ride from the downtown Loop is the Gold Coast, where Michelle Obama shops at Iram, just down from Barneys New York, with the excellent restaurant Fred’s beside a gift department that’s like a museum of good taste.

Of restaurants there are endless choices. Recently visited RL (Ralph Lauren), MityNice, Prairie Fire, NAHA, Shaw’s Crab House, and the Art Institute’s Terzo Piano, where a dessert of Capriole fresh goat’s milk cheesecake with hazelnut brittle, ginger carrot puree, and candied beets costs, $10.

Tell us about your travel, your exploits, your interesting grandchildren! “Ad Lib” welcomes your news. Send your info to the Osher office or email to ADULTLL@andrew.cmu.edu
library, the services available when it first opened, and the dedicated efforts to save the library from closing. Despite the power loss, we were able to catch a glimpse of the darkened Music Hall, where we could imagine cultural events of the past, with patrons sitting in small, velvet-covered seats. The French and Indian War Museum on the second floor had beautiful artwork and relics, including arrowheads and munitions.

On the bus again, to the Father Ryan Arts Center on Chartiers Avenue in McKees Rocks, a Focus on Renewal Project, where Dr. McCollester lectured on the 1909 Pressed Steel Car Plant strike, and then we toured the art gallery exhibits by John Del Monte and photographer Ray Black.

We had lunch at St. Mary’s Ukrainian Orthodox Church in McKees Rocks Bottoms and dined on pierogies, cabbage, haluska, kielbasa, and assorted cookies. The pastor of the ornately decorated church blessed and warmly welcomed us and spoke about the many ethnic churches in the Bottoms. He urged us to return for a Sunday service.

The bus then drove by the old Pressed Steel Car Plant, a manufacturer of railroad cars, which was the scene of the bloody and deadly 1909 strike. Working in the plant was so dangerous that the Allegheny County Coroner estimated that one worker per day died. The terrible discontent with the pay system, coupled with the fact that the community women were subjected to sexual harassment and worse, caused the strike of 1909 during which at least 11 people were killed. In the town of Presston, Dr. McCollester showed us the historical Presston marker that commemorates the 1909 strike. He wrote the narrative for the marker.

Our next stop was St. Nicholas Croatian Church in Millvale, the home of the Maxo Vanka murals painted from 1937-41. Docent Mary Petrich explained that Maxo Vanka came from Croatia at the behest of the then-pastor of St. Nicholas. He painted scenes reminiscent of life in Croatia, the tragedy of war, and the sorrowful immigrant life in the US. The murals were interspersed with many religious figures. They are emotional and gripping, showing the pain and misery of the Croatian immigrants amidst the depicted wealth of one robber baron and the hopes of salvation and the damnation of hell. It is worth the short trip to Millvale to view these murals. I guarantee that you will be moved. Efforts are being made to restore and repair the murals.

This was a day filled with history—the known and unknown facts of our home in Western Pennsylvania. And Dr. McCollester is the master at telling that story. Kudos to Bob Dickman for another wonderfully planned and executed trip!

(Additional facts for this article were taken from the Pennsylvania Labor History Journal, Volume 31, December 2009.)
ambulances and traffic on Route 28 and arrived. The show—three comedies written by Dr. Thomas to culminate the Osher course—would go on for the Osher students and an audience of 50 to 60 people. With scripts in hand, the Osher Readers’ Theater finally began.

**Act I.** Earl Parker made his stage debut with the lead in “Reach Out and Touch Someone Else.” Earl’s pacing and impatience captured the protagonist, Paul, who is beleaguered by human and nonhuman phone calls and voice mail systems during a medical emergency.

The audience groaned its recognition with each new unsolicited call: Ellen Katzen’s robot voice from a hospital’s phone menu, Diane Goldman’s impatient telephone operator, Paula Mathieson’s panicked little girl, who has her own emergency, and Paula’s second role as an “interactive” programmed response system.

If there were awards, “Best Costume” would go to Paula Mathieson’s homemade silver box (from which her head popped out) with a Smiley Face on the front and the message “Have a Nice Day” on the back. It was the perfect costume/prop to enhance her role as June, the Ingratiating Automaton.

**Act II.** The subtitle for the second one-act comedy, “Home Sweet Alley,” reveals much about the two characters portrayed by Mary Cay Burke-Hamill and Ronald Fuchs. “An Irascible, Opinionated Bag Lady Repeatedly Tested by Life and a Weathered, Aging Homeless Man Struggling with the Day-to-Day Experience of Living on the Streets.”

Director/actress Mary Cay gave us a caustic but forgiving Aggie that made us laugh and cry. We sighed when Ron’s Carlo gives Aggie two very special offers. Mary Cay and Ron captured the heart of the script and collected a lot of junk for their bags and carts. Best props and scenery award for this act!

**ACT III.** Beatrice Jones not only directed “Aristotle Aristobulus” but also played Marija, an obstinate, overprotective Croatian immigrant, who wants to protect her widowed sister Tihana, played by Leslie Evans. Earl Parker, with a charming black mustache, became Mr. Aristobulus, a handsome, proud, self-made Greek businessman who wants to marry Tihana. Sparks fly between Marija (Beatrice) and Aristobulus (Earl).

“I tink dis Air-is-toot-le Air-is-too-bu-lus is nuttin but “gold digger” or “Pittsburgh sport.” Marija further accuses him of being a “spoiled little baby.” Beatrice portrayed a Marija full of suspicion of any man who has interest in her little sister. Aristobulus retaliates with comments about Marija’s “big sour puss” and offers to put her on a bus back to Chicago from where she came. Tihana finally decides to speak for herself, and the little Greek dance at the end of the act perhaps foreshadows a Greek wedding.

To help with developing our roles, Dr. Thomas gave us study guides that encouraged us to think about costumes, hairstyles, accessories, mannerisms, and personality for our characters. Dr. Thomas and the student/directors also gave us mini-reviews and made suggestions for improvement after each rehearsal. Paula Mathieson also helped Osher students with their characterizations. But ultimately each Osher student was responsible for the character he or she created during the six-week class. And it was a blast to act on stage for one night.
Members Don’t Tire of Revisiting Great Novels

By Sylvia Sachs

One of Gretchen Lankford’s first suggestions when she was getting the Academy for Lifelong Learning (now Osher) organized in 1992 was a class on great novels and their authors. She had successfully led such a class at the Mt. Lebanon Library, and she was pretty sure it would appeal to those who would join this new group dedicated to intellectual stimulation.

Obviously Gretchen was right. “Great Novels and Writers Revisited” started in the Summer 1994 term and has kept on attracting full classrooms ever since. And all of the original group of study leaders who joined Gretchen in setting up the program—Martha Browne, Audrey Catrow, Tom Lazaroff and Helen-Faye Rosenblum—are still coming up with wonderful book selections and enthusiastic leadership. Jane Purifoy is a more recent addition to the leadership, and she, like all committee members, adds a special individual viewpoint on the books and on literature in general.

“Our first book was Willa Cather’s My Antonia, and Jack Feeney led it,” reports Audrey Catrow, one great record keeper. “Most of the time we read six books a term, but occasionally we read a few more. That adds up to 288 books by the end of Summer 2010.”

Also, a few books have been read more than once over the years. New members of the class may request taking up again some especially popular book. Because a different person volunteers to cover a book at each class, many different viewpoints and philosophies are presented and added to or argued against at each session, assuring a lively time with lots of talking.

What holds this class together for so many years and has kept it so popular?

“A combination of energy and enthusiasm, I think,” says Helen-Faye Rosenblum who, as a professional writer and critic, is very often called on to join the discussions. “The people in our classes have a real passion for reading and talking about the meanings of the books. We have some people who never really read fiction before—maybe their careers or professions left them no time for novels. Now they are getting so much pleasure from them.”

While a book may occasionally bring out opposing reactions and opinions, none of the leaders ever have to separate hotheaded speakers.

“We did have one rather heated occasion,” Helen Faye recalled when pushed. “It was over Ayn Rand’s Atlas Shrugged. None of us really liked the book, but we felt it had been given so much attention and publicity it should be read by a class like ours. The man who led the class was a dedicated Rand believer, and he really got his listeners upset. It was pretty wild. I can tell you about this because the man moved away to Florida and will not have to defend himself.”

“Great Novels and Authors Revisited” remains one of Osher’s signature classes. But the variety and diversity of the curriculum provides many options, from how to play the ukulele to how to cook fish to how set your finances straight. Aren’t Osher folks lucky to have so many choices!

In the uke class, a new addition to the curriculum: below, from left, Rosemary Cambor-Frelke, Heather Stein, and Ann Hazlett get ready for their number; bottom, the class plays jazz progressions with the jazz pianist
Downsizing: Report from the Home Front
By Joan Gaul

Do:

- **Downsize** tr. v.: to make in a smaller size.

**Downsize:** subject of courses at Osher. Easier to define than to do.

Many Osherites have made the transition from big old houses to smaller quarters. I suspect it wasn’t a giggle for any of them. However, It’s All Talk Editor Roz Treger asked me to write about our recent move. This is our adventure, with Dos and Don’ts.

It began in the summer of 2009, when a young couple said they’d like to buy the 12-room house we had lived in for 33 years. Then, they kind of disappeared, reappearing before Christmas wanting to take possession as soon as possible.

**Do:** Give yourself plenty of time to plan your downsize.

This gave us pause. We knew it was a tough market. We knew we weren’t getting younger. We also knew that in addition to what we had amassed over 33 years, there were boxes that hadn’t been looked at since 1968.

**Don’t:** Hang on to your old term papers, the programs from the school plays, the things you saved when your parents died, or the grandchildren’s drawings.

By January, we still didn’t have an agreement, but it was pretty clear that there was going to be a sale.

**Do:** Sit down and have a nice glass of wine. Talk to everyone you know who has downsized. Get hints. Take names. Sign up for Angie’s list. You’ll meet lots of new people.

We are among those whose sons who came back to Pittsburgh and brought or found wives of great talent and ingenuity. In our case Ann, who knows how to get rid of things, and Karen, who knows how to reconstruct in small houses, liked and took many things we cared about.

**Don’t:** Forget to be nice to your relatives.

Of course there were leftovers. A lot was left over.

**Do:** Explore all avenues of disposal. Learn about new ones. In addition to the Vietnam Vets, who will take just about anything and are good about picking it up, there are other places for things. I’d never heard of Pittsburgh Freecycle, an online site. Ann posted photos, and folks who needed or wanted the items came and took them away. “They” were anything from furniture to canning jars. No money here, but good feelings. For paper, all those old tax returns, brokerage reports, bills with credit card numbers, there is a service that brings a big bin with a lock to your house. You toss the papers in; they come for the locked container, take it away, and shred everything.

Craig’s List is a good outlet for anything someone might buy. You’ll not get much, but you are fulfilling someone’s need. In addition to paper and furniture odds and ends, we had books, and we had clothes, closeted but not recently worn. We tried vintage shops and nonprofit resale. The latter was marginally more rewarding, not financially, but in good vibes. We sold some furniture, some books, and some clothing, which gave them a future, but the proceeds were miniscule.

**Don’t:** Expect to make money on your treasures.

We had many good art books and catalogs. Would universities be interested? They were, possibly. I cataloged, emailed the information, received a response, and learned that the man I live with couldn’t part with them. We have many good art books and catalogs in storage.

**Do:** Think outside the box, but don’t be surprised if it doesn’t work.

The new digs may have on-site storage, but although we whittled, we gave, we tossed, we donated, we sold, we scrapped—through a very good debris-removal service, we have boxes and boxes, many of unknown content, in an outside storage facility. As such facilities range greatly in price, explore.

**Don’t:** Assume that the on-site storage that your new place offers will be adequate.

No matter what, moving day arrived. I was glad that it had stopped snowing. I would have preferred that the movers and the debris people hadn’t worked in the same space at the same time, but, at last, everything was out. The house was empty. The house was clean.

**Do:** Hard, but try to relax throughout. Take classes. See movies. Play bridge. Smile a lot. Treasure the family, friends, and tradesmen who have done their best to help.

Because it does get done. We did downsize and move. Initially, we were surrounded by all those boxes, but, once emptied, our movers took them away. We needed some repairs. I now know a great furniture repairman. There are things we can’t find, but perhaps we don’t need them. On reflection, it wasn’t as bad as all that.

However, if you are on one floor, if stairs don’t bother you, if you’re comfortable where you are, and if, for whatever reason, you don’t have to move,

**Don’t.**
Variety Spiced the Osher Spring Lecture Season

Osher members enjoyed a variety of interesting and entertaining lectures during the spring months. On March 24, cartoonist Rob Rogers, left, titled his talk “How a Cartoonists’ Brain Works.” He illustrated his lecture with witty cartoons projected on the screen in McConomy auditorium. CMU history professor Joel Tarr, center, spoke on May 10 on “An Environmental History of Pittsburgh and Its Region.” On June 8, Edward J. Reis, right, with Lecture Chair Jeanne Hanchett, re-enacted the life of George Westinghouse, complete with period costume and beard.