Come One! Come All! Come Learn!
By Rory Geeseman

Remember that elementary school English test where you had to differentiate and provide examples of synonyms, antonyms, and homonyms? Acronyms were not on that test because the practice of creating a new identifying term from letters of an existing phrase was not the phenomenon it is today. In fact, the noun was not even coined until 1943 from the Greek akros “tip, end,” and English onym “name.” Speaking of elementary school and acronyms, allow me to introduce Carnegie Mellon Institute for Talented and Secondary Students, acronymically known as C-MITES.

As OSHER (acronymed by me as Older Scholars Having Educational Recreation) is to the over-50 set, C-MITES offers a curriculum to students in grades K-9. First-come, first-served, no-testing-required summer classes known as Stepping-stones, provide unique and extraordinary learning experiences. Riverquest Environmental Science for students in grades 3-6 explores freshwater ecology onboard Explorer, a new hybrid, floating, fully equipped laboratory craft. For grades 7-9, DNA: The Sweet Code of Life gives the opportunity to explore DNA and actually build a candy molecule. Children in kindergarten and first grade experience The Body Central, which begins with the five senses and progresses to the brain, spinal cord, and nervous system. Half-day tuition is $57, while full day-classes are $99.

The Steppingstone menu is, in fact, C-MITES Lite, as another faster-paced, rigorous summer program is offered to academically talented Continued on page 4

Looking at Margaret Morrison: Then and Now
By Rosalyn Treger

When Nicholas Lane’s course about Eastern Europe met last winter in Margaret Morrison Hall, many Osher students were introduced to the historic building that was named for Andrew Carnegie’s mother and was the home of Margaret Morrison Carnegie College, a vocational school for women from 1906 through 1973. For Ruth Winer, it was a return to the building where she’d been a member of the class of ’43, graduating in December 1942—and something of a rebel.

“My father said I could go to any college in the world as long as it was in Pittsburgh. And I could take any course in the world that I wanted if it was nursing, secretarial, or teaching.” Although Ruth wanted to study law, her father was convinced that being an attorney would limit her chances for marriage in their small town of Aliquippa. “He said, ‘If you don’t find a husband in college and you become an attorney, it will be harder because men don’t want to marry women who have more training or are brighter than they.’ And the goal in life was to get a good husband.” Continued on page 13
From the President

By Julian Eligator

I’m writing this column while sitting on our porch 20 yards from Long Island Sound in Connecticut. It is low tide. The beach is unspoiled as the summer people, boats, ski-dos, kayaks, and catamarans are not here. There is not even a single beach chair in sight. There are large chunks of driftwood on the beach. The sky is clear and the sun shimmers off the water, occasionally interrupted by diving gulls. I could do justice to this scene, if only I took more advantage of Judy Robinson’s poetry class.

I’m reading a nonfiction book about U.S. slavery 40 years after the Emancipation Proclamation—why didn’t we discuss this in the course about racism taught by Eric Springer?

That’s what Osher does for me, and I hope for you. It helps me think outside my proverbial box. It’s a real education.

In the fall we will have 135 courses. It portends to be an exciting lineup. For the first time we will have a class at the East Liberty Presbyterian Church. In addition to street parking, there is a metered lot behind the East Liberty library across the street. We still hope for more space once the Computer Science Department moves to the new Gates building.

For the 2009-2010 year we welcome Jeanne Hanchett, Joe Shirk, and Sue Gibbon to the board. We are pleased to have these new committee chairs: Grace Moritz will coordinate Special Events, and Jeanne Hanchett will head the Evening Lectures subcommittee of Special Events.

Our continuing committee chairs deserve our appreciation for their time and commitment: Sue Gibbon, Membership; Sally Cohen and Bea Jones, Curriculum; Suzanne Flood and Joe Scorpion, Mailing; Phyllis Silver, Reception Desk Volunteers; Roz Treger, Newsletter; Fritz Okie, Finance.

Thanks also to continuing chairs of Special Events subcommittees: Bob Dickman continues to coordinate Day Trips; Rosemarie DeRiso plans our Multiday Trips; Jayne Keffer plans Luncheons; and Flip Conti chairs the Volunteer Recognition Event.

I wish you all success with your course selection!

Gates Center to Open in August

By Joe Scorpion

The Gates Center for Computer Science, made possible by a $20 million lead gift from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, will enable the university to broaden its leadership in computer science by providing more space to nurture important ongoing and new endeavors. Designed by the Atlanta-based architectural firm of Mack Scogin Merrill Elam and completed at a cost of $89 million, the complex will consist of two buildings totaling 210,000 square feet.

Included in the complex is a 150-space underground parking garage as well as 310 private offices, 32 labs, 11 conference rooms, and a 250-seat auditorium. More than 8,000 square feet of open space and rampways will allow for easy navigation and collaboration among faculty, staff, and undergraduate students.

Four existing structures were razed to make room for the new Gates Center. These included the old student center where our A.L.L. program had two classrooms, the campus printing and publications building, the planetary robotics building, and a set of garages.

Photo by Al Treger
Annual Meeting Wraps Up a Good Year

By Millicent M. Lynch
Administrative Coordinator

The 2009 Annual Meeting was held on April 23 at the very accommodating Concordia Club with 82 members attending the business meeting and lunch. During the business brief, the two important subjects discussed were Osher’s financial condition and revisions to the bylaws.

Treasurer Fritz Okie reported that we have sufficient cash with no debt. He said that the Osher Foundation has approved a $1 million endowment and a $50,000 bridge loan [which have since been received]. The $1 million endowment will be deposited with the university’s endowment funds, and the university will direct the investments. Only the interest earned on the endowment’s investments can be used for Osher’s benefit.

Several changes to the bylaws were approved by the membership. Notable among the changes were making the Curriculum and Membership Committee chairs ex-officio members of the board with voting privileges. Also enacted was a provision that a board member may be removed if he/she misses three board meetings a year without a reasonable excuse.

Past President Rita Zecher proposed three new board members, who were approved by the membership:

Suzanne Gibbon is presently the chair of the Membership Committee and is a study leader for Osher. A graduate of Carnegie Mellon with a major in nutrition, Suzanne spent her career as a clinical dietician, an outpatient dietitian, and as a diabetes educator. Suzanne met her husband, Gerst, (also a member and study leader for Osher) while attending Carnegie Mellon. Gerst and Suzanne, parents of two daughters, lost one daughter three years ago. Suzanne enjoys art and music classes and also classes addressing world issues.

Jeanne Hanchett is the new chair of the Lecture Committee. Jeanne is a retired pediatrician and graduate of the Cornell University Medical Center; she completed residencies at Vanderbilt University Medical Center and Baylor College of Medicine. Jeanne is a grandmother of 11 grandchildren. Since joining Osher six years ago, she has taken over 20 classes, many taught by Clarke Thomas, her favorite study leader. “I took five or six classes from him, including the Whiskey Rebellion and Lewis and Clark.” Jeanne also enjoys classes in history, music, economics, and politics.

Joseph B. Shirk was born in New Castle, Indiana, graduated from Purdue, and has a background in sales and marketing. In 1992, Joe and his wife Rosemarie started a business, Shirk & Associates, a consulting firm specializing in sales promotions and research. Clients included food companies and Harpo Studios (the Oprah Winfrey Show). Joe and Rosemarie moved to Pittsburgh in 2004 and spend most days auditing honors classes at Pitt and taking Osher classes at Pitt and Carnegie Mellon. Joe says that “the Osher programs have added a whole new dimension to our lives, stimulating classes and discussions, but most important, a whole new circle of interesting friends.”

Osher awarded its 2009 Thank You gift to Gloriana St. Clair, Dean of the University Libraries, in the amount of $3,908. Gloriana, a member of the Osher Board of Directors, secretary to the organization, and an Osher study leader, was pivotal in guiding us through the grant period with the Osher

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Clarke Thomas: Constant Student
By Sylvia Sachs

From his childhood in West Africa through his more than 60 years as a newspaperman, his 56 years in Pittsburgh, and his 17 years as an Academy of Lifelong Learning/Osher member, Clarke Thomas was a constant student. His interests included the wide expanse of his professional career as a journalist as well as his personal fascination with history, philosophy, and religion.

And the nearly 1,700 members of Osher have been the beneficiaries of his desire to interact with others with a similar curiosity and love of learning. He became a study leader in the first semester of A.L.L. and finished his last class, “Post-Election: What Next?” a few weeks before he died on Feb. 21.

“I don’t think he ever missed giving at least one class a year. Often he did more than one,” says his wife, Jean, who sometimes helped out with the very substantial preparation Clarke applied to each class even though her own many other activities left her too busy for Osher membership.

“He was a great filer of material, both on paper and on his computer,” she says. “That’s how he could give a class such as the one on men who ran for and did not become a U.S president.”

Clarke and Jean met in Hutchison, Kansas, in the 1950s when both were working there, he at a newspaper, she at a boutique. The fact that both were graduates of the University of Kansas, he before she arrived on campus, encouraged her to contact him. Throughout their marriage, they moved from newspapers in Lincoln, Nebraska; Wichita, Kansas; and Oklahoma City until they arrived in Pittsburgh in 1951, where they stayed and Clarke became a much-honored staff member of the Post-Gazette.

“Clarke really enjoyed the classes and the people,” says Mrs. Thomas. “He never wanted to miss one. One time a few years ago he was in the hospital, and he was very upset when his doctor said he could not leave even though he insisted he had to teach the next day. The only way we could persuade him to stay was when one of his star pupils, Harvey Zeve, agreed to take over that session.”

Clarke Thomas was a valued member of our organization, and he will be greatly missed.

Come Learn!
Continued from page 1

students in grades 3-8. Designed to intellectually stimulate very bright students, this course of study is highly competitive. Eligibility is determined by above-level scores on specified tests, scores in the 95th percentile on standardized tests, participation in gifted programs, as well as teacher recommendations. Highly skilled instructors are chosen for their subject mastery, as well as skill and enthusiasm for working with intelligent youth.

Roaming Ancient Rome, for those in grades 3-5, provides the opportunity to not only study the rise and fall, but make togas, design coins, build an arch, and even eat Roman! Amusement Park Physics provides those in grades 4-6 with an on-site opportunity to explore, measure, and experience G-forces, accelerations, gravity, motion, and weightlessness. Students in Grades 6-8 can pursue Green Robotics and actually build a robot that can sense environmental conditions, as well as make life “greener.” Most classes are one-half day for one or two weeks, and tuition ranges from $190 to $410. Costs are substantially reduced for those who have taken the C-MITES own EXPLORE test, and financial aid is available.

But wait. There’s more! C-MITES also sponsors professional development workshops for teachers in compliance with Pennsylvania’s Continuing Education Act 48. Held at the CMU campus, as well as in schools, these programs help teachers differentiate, stimulate, and educate Pittsburgh’s brightest and best. So Carnegie Mellon embraces college students, OSHER students, C-MITES, and their teachers. Is this a great university or what?
I was asked to take the position of evening lecture chair for Osher at CMU in the spring of 2007. As a lifelong resident of Pittsburgh, I knew I had a good network of potential speakers among my friends, neighbors, and professional contacts. Over the next two years, I took blatant advantage of some of those acquaintances by asking them to become speakers or procure speakers for our Osher programs.

My first attempt to arrange a lecture was a complete bust. Osher member Marcia Levaur, who has known me all my life, recommended an executive from a prominent Pittsburgh healthcare agency. He was happy to talk about the many innovative lifestyle and healthcare options available for the frail elderly, but we had so few reservations that the program was canceled. I was not off to an auspicious beginning.

For October 2007 I contacted Dena Haritos Tsamitis, head of CMU’s Information Networking Institute, who gave an excellent presentation on cyber fraud and misuse of the Internet. In November I was lucky enough to have an extraordinary program dropped in my lap. Osher member and study leader Dr. Joseph Eaton of the University of Pittsburgh arranged for us to hear a speech by Zeid Ra’ad Zeid Al-Hussein, Jordanian ambassador to the U.S. It proved to be such a popular offering that the talk was moved to Levy Hall at Rodef Shalom Temple, where he spoke to a packed house. Later in November, I recruited a former student of mine, Sheila Roth Solomon, a registered genetics counselor. She gave an informative and well-attended talk on the genetic components of cancer. I gradually began to feel a little more confident that I could do this job.

For the December 2007 lecture, I called upon an old friend whose children I had taught, Dr. Ronald Linden, professor and former director of the Center for Russian and East European Studies at the University of Pittsburgh. We had so many reservations that we had to move to a larger room. Dr. Linden gave a very well-received lecture on U.S. foreign policy after George W. Bush.

After three serious lectures, I decided to “lighten up” with a cultural program. Osher member Suzanne Hershey recommended her friend Elden Gatwood, a professional musician and founder of the bagpipe degree program at Carnegie Mellon. He wowed the Osher audience in January 2008 by marching into the room playing the bagpipe in full Scottish regalia. Our February program was Post-Gazette writer Brian O’Neill, who gave a partly-serious, partly-humorous talk on the joys and frustrations of being a journalist in Pittsburgh. By March, I was back to calling in favors from old friends. Dr. Bruce Rabin, director of the UPMC Healthy Lifestyle Program, is an old poker-playing buddy of my late husband. He gave a terrific presentation on the importance of reducing stress in our lives.

In April it was another lecture on U.S. foreign policy, clearly a favorite topic for Osher members. Dan Simpson, associate editor of the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, discussed what he believed should be the foreign policy objectives of the next president.

That ended my first year as Osher’s evening lecture chair and I began to feel that I was finally getting into the groove. I spent a good part of the summer making many calls to my friends and associates, trying to line up speakers.

In September 2008 we started the academic year with an excellent program featuring Pittsburgh City Councilman Bill Peduto, who was recruited by Osher member Gloria Kleiman. He spoke on his goals for Pittsburgh’s future, “Clean, Lean and Green.” In October a willing volunteer, Dr. Robert Resnick, outstanding physicist and retired professor from Rensselaer Institute of Technology, presented a fascinating slide show and lecture on Albert Einstein. Later in October, I drafted another member of my

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Confessions
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husband’s poker group, Stuart Hoffman, chief economist for PNC Financial Services. He advised a large audience that the economy would probably get worse before it got better. How right he was! In November, we were extremely fortunate to have Ken Love, Emmy Award-winning local film-maker. He treated Osher members to a private screening of his documentary on Samuel Rosenberg, the internationally acclaimed Pittsburgh artist and teacher. Many thanks go to Osher member and Sam Rosenberg’s niece, Ruth Westerman, who helped arrange this program. Our December lecturer was recruited by our Administrative Coordinator, Millie Lynch: William Block, Jr., retired chairman of the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette and Civil War historian, gave an interesting talk on James B. McPherson, the highest-ranking officer in the Union Army to be killed in the Civil War.

As 2009 began, I was still searching my memory banks for acquaintances with interesting stories to tell. Osher member Al Treger reminded me of a childhood schoolmate, Dr. Elaine Berkowitz, a dentist and lieutenant colonel in the U.S. Army Reserves. The weather on January 13 was terrible, but those who braved the cold were rewarded with an amusing and moving PowerPoint presentation on Elaine’s experiences as an Army dentist in Iraq.

The February and March programs were outstanding cultural evenings. Osher member Roz Treger helped to facilitate a visit from Andrés Cárdenes, concertmaster of the Pittsburgh Symphony and conductor of the Pittsburgh Symphony Chamber Orchestra. Despite obvious pain that required surgery soon after our program, Mr. Cárdenes held our interest with the story of his life and career and played a short violin solo.

For March I was trolling the East End of Pittsburgh for a particularly unique and creative evening. Luckily, I stopped at the Silk Elephant for lunch and noticed a postcard advertising cultural programs of Thai cooking and dance sponsored by restaurant owners Eileen and Nor Nareedokmai. What a coup for me and for Osher! They presented a cooking demonstration by Chef Nor and brought a troupe of professional native dancers from Thailand. We were treated to a fabulous buffet of Thai delicacies served by the beautiful Thai performers.

In April I felt we were due for another “serious” lecture, so it was back to U.S. foreign policy. I recruited an old friend and colleague, Dr. Robert Donnorummo, University of Pittsburgh professor and leading authority on Russia and Eastern Europe. Bob very graciously agreed to give a timely and informative talk on the current state of U.S.-Russia relations.

I knew that May would be my “swan song” as chair, and I wanted it to be something special. The perfect opportunity presented itself when I saw an article in a CMU publication written by Dr. Susan Polansky, chair of the Department of Modern Languages. She had done serious academic research on the anthropology of chocolate. I had taught Susan’s daughter and son-in-law and her son and daughter-in-law and I knew her reputation as an outstanding scholar and teacher. A great teacher + chocolate = an Osher program made in heaven! Susan consented to give the lecture, and I pounced on the idea of replacing our usual coffee and cookies with an extravaganza of chocolate delights. We ended the year with a wonderful PowerPoint presentation by Dr. Polansky and a buffet of chocolates including chocolate-covered coffee beans, chocolate-covered mango, chocolate-covered nuts, and hot chocolate beverage.

At the May lecture: above, sampling chocolates; below, Dr. Susan Polansky left, with Rita Zecher
Photos by Millie Lynch

My two years as lecture chair have come to an end, and I am happy to inform my friends that it is now safe to take my phone calls and open my email. And many thanks to all those named and unnamed who contributed to the success of the Osher evening lectures.
It’s a long road to Los Angeles from Pittsburgh. And it’s getting longer every year for this jet-go grandmother who bristles mightily at the indignities of airport security frisking, lost luggage, complicated ticketing fees, and sardine coach treatment. Now add swine flu and assorted natural disasters such as earthquake, fires and drought.

But worth every breath of it—this year’s visit a double-header joy of son’s 50th birthday celebration and a rare Mother’s Day with my kids. Add a visit to the Getty Art Center at the foothills of the Santa Monica Mountains, followed by dinner at Il Cielo in Beverly Hills, and voila! California might be going bankrupt, but it is still a great place to visit.

Yes, worth it, each and every travel inconvenience—including an inflight, frequent-nursing mother with six-month-old hollering-handful as seat companions. The return night flight was more comfortable and less noisy. Once we got above my second earthquake.

“You’re kidding,” I replied to my cell phone alert from my son in Ojai, whose wife had just delivered me to LAX Terminal, returning to the car just in time for the 15-second rumblings.


“The earthquake, mom! Didn’t you notice?” He shook his head in despair. “The earthquake, mom! Didn’t you notice?”

“I’ll go check,” and he ran back to the house to his computer.

The Ojai quake registered almost five, slightly stronger than the second temblor ten days later in Los Angeles, which ruptured a fault under the city, capable of a dangerous magnitude seven. Just minor damage like shattered windows at a Starbucks, but “It’s on the watch list,” said geophysicist Ken Hudnut of the Geological Survey.

Later I learned that ten aftershocks ensued, but by then I was airborne above the frolicking fault line and yes, the Santa Barbara fires. I remembered my inflight the week before, when my only excitement was that lively infant seat-companion. No mention of the unfolding potential disaster at the airport or on the plane.

“We’re used to it,” my son had said after a decade of transference from East to West Coast. “Almost as much fun as surfing.”

Hello? No one sweats the Big One, but “it’s not a matter of if, it’s just a matter of when,” another geophysicist has stated.

Meanwhile, bless their well-tanned, talented skins. What’s not to like about waking up to a view of Los Padres Mountains extending to the Pacific beaches? The scent of jasmine and lavender, the taste of avocados and apricots still breathing from the branch, the crash of the surf—and music, music, music, everywhere, indoors and out, from my son’s home music studio to the schools and concert halls. What’s not to enjoy? Arnold’s fiscal problems are his and Obama’s.

Denial among happy Californians runs as deep as the seismic tremors, from the Newport–Inglewood fault under Los Angeles to the San Andreas Fault cozily running beneath my son’s five-acre property in Ojai, about 60 miles northwest of L.A. (If you remember the movie “Lost Horizons,” the mystical Shangri-la was filmed there.)

It’s for East Coast mothers to sweat . . . and to understand. Whose fault remains to be seen. Meanwhile, it’s back to real Italian pasta (choose your spot), to real sweet corn, to budding peonies and iris and to planting the tomatoes. It’s Summertime on terra firma in Pittsburgh—and I’m loving it.
Many Osher members get their names in the local newspapers when they’re involved in some community activity, and we like to point out those reported to Ad Lib.

One large colorfully illustrated article in the May 7 issue of the Post-Gazette featured Osher member Ron Fuchs, who with his brother, Bobby, operated the almost 100-year-old family-owned Frick Park Market in Point Breeze until they sold it in 2000. The market was one of those beloved “mom and pop stores everyone wants to live around the corner from,” wrote Patricia Lowry, who did live around the corner. She wanted to recall its Fuchs family history and describe the pleasures given customers during Ron and Bobby’s 20 years behind the counter. And to report that its new owners were carrying on in a similar way.

The May 19 East section of the Post-Gazette included an enthusiastic story about stained glass flowers decorating the windows of the Forward-Shady apartment building near Allderdice high school and the Allderdice art teacher whose jewelry-making class made the flowers. The teacher, Julie Farber, is a daughter of member Zelda Curtiss. Julie said making beautiful things helps build students’ self-esteem, and they learn as well from the many projects they do for charitable purposes. Their work is in the new Children’s Hospital, and they have donated jewelry that they’ve made to homeless shelters and charities supplying clothing to people seeking jobs.

Sometimes names of Osher family members appear in publications in other cities. Roz and Al Treger are proud of their daughter Flora, an internist practicing in a women’s health group near Providence, Rhode Island. This past April Flora was listed in Rhode Island Magazine as one of the best doctors for women in the state. It was the second time Flora has been included in a “best doctors” list in the magazine.

Marty Brigham’s many friends will be glad to know she’s doing well and looking radiant. She was here to clear out her Squirrel Hill house before moving in June to California near where her daughters live. Her one problem is that her speech has only returned in part. But that did not stop her from traveling to Italy with daughter Mary Lou at Easter time to visit her youngest son, Jimmy, who lives there. Marty will be living at the Bret Harte Retirement Inn, 305 W. Main Street, Grass Valley, CA 95945.

Joe Scorpion is a proud grandfather, as all his friends know. A big sports buff, he likes to report the success of his grandson Steve Scorpion in the basketball world. But more of that later. How about his granddaughter Julianna Eyer, a third-grader at Bellevue Elementary School, being a member of the Pittsburgh Civic Light Opera Acad-
Ad Lib

emy and appearing in the musical “Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat” at the Benedum Center. That’s not chopped liver!

As for Steve, he was one of eight basketball coaches chosen to participate in the Giants of Africa program held in Abuja, Nigeria. He was a clinic instructor and counselor in the program for young players between 6 ft. 8 in. and 7 ft., designed to teach them the fundamentals of the game. About 30 Nigerians who have been through this program are now playing in U.S. high schools.

Our gimlet-eyed Administrative Coordinator Millie Lynch and Registrar Mary Cay Burke-Hamill spotted some other Osher people in recent newspapers:

A January letter in the Post-Gazette from Hazel Cope taking critic Robert Crone to task for a negative review of a production of “Porgy and Bess” A story and photo of Walter Schwartz in the Tribune-Review March 2 reporting on the waiting period before he could be a volunteer tutor in math and reading for children in the Woodland Hills schools. He had to get clearance from the FBI. He and other volunteers in the program did get the clearance eventually, but it made an interesting little cloak-and-dagger feature for the paper. A Tribune-Review story about La Roche College’s Founder’s Gala March 20 included a photo of co-curator James White. Arthur Lassman, a frequent letter-writer to the Post-Gazette, commented on a Brian O’Neill column of March 27.

Study Leader Renee Piechocki was mentioned in an April 6 P-G story as a consultant on the destiny of Virgil Cantini murals the new owners of One Oliver Plaza, Downtown, wanted to remove. On May 1 the P-G again had a long story on these murals; Renee was again interviewed. On April 4, a poem by Michael Rose called “The Giver” was published on the P-G op-ed page, and “To Civility: April” by our longtime study leader and much-admired poet Judy Robinson appeared on that page April 11. Harpist Susan Hershey at her harp was featured among pictures of social events in the April 14 P-G. The April 21 P-G included a picture of members Dr. Jim Dill and Bill and Betsy Amis at an art event. Study Leader Patricia De Marco wrote a column on Rachel Carson that was highlighted in the P-G on April 22.

A touching photo of member Yonah Demby appeared on May 17 in the Blairsville Dispatch. A big article May 9 in the Piper, the CMU Internal Communications Department news source, featured Vivian Loftness’s thoughts on “Architecture’s Role in Sustainability.” She will be teaching an Osher class this fall. The May 11 Tribune-Review had a picture of Charlie Humphrey at a Gateway to the Arts event. He, of course, is a wonderful study leader. In a May 17 letter to the P-G editor, Regis Murrin wrote thoughtfully about supporting a then-current effort of President Obama. Sadly, on May 16 the Post-Gazette carried a long obituary for Roberta Davis, a founding member of A.L.L. (Osher), and a very fine, talented woman.

The May 21 Post-Gazette ran a story about an unusual workshop on furoshiki, the Japanese art of wrapping cloth, planned for May 23 at the Mt. Lebanon Public Library. Conducted by Rosaly DeMaioS Roffman with Caroline Tibbetts of the library staff, the workshop is part of the library’s “Be Green” series. The May 22 P-G described a series of lectures on tours focusing on the stained-glass windows of Charles J. Connick, sponsored by the Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation. The final event in the series will be a lecture and tour of the Cathedral of Learning campus. Connick experts Ronald Klebick and member and study leader Joan Gaul will lead the tour of Connick glass at the University of Pittsburgh.
In the spare, eloquent prose of Colm Toibin’s fiction, certain themes and variations frequently recur, mirroring aspects of the author’s own life. Played out in many permutations, he gives us the quiet drama of children separated from parents, sometimes permanently, sometimes not. Frequently his characters are separated from a homeland as well, deprived of the geographic and the familial sense of nurture all at once, struggling to make sense of the unexpected moment in the unanticipated place.

Many aspects of love find their way into Toibin’s novels and short stories. Informed by an impeccable sense of place and detail, reflective, no doubt, of his perspectives as critic, essayist, and vivid chronicler of travel, Toibin entices his readers into small universes fragrant with minutiae, teeming with detail, subtle in their magnetism, absolutely compelling.

_Brooklyn_ begins in the quiet Irish village of Enniscorthy, actually Toibin’s own home village, at a time shortly after the end of World War II. There Eilis Lacey, the self-effacing protagonist, lives quietly with her widowed mother and her confident, accomplished, glamorous, and athletic older sister, Rose. The three brothers in the family have gone off to England to find work and their destinies. Eilis, diligently studying bookkeeping, understands that to her will fall the life of the dutiful daughter, superintendent her mother into old age, following the domestic conventions of her time and place, perhaps enjoying the minor prestige of a position in accounting, but not just yet.

One day, seemingly out of nowhere, Eilis receives a peremptory command to report to the eccentric grocery store run by the caustic and arbitrary Miss Kelly, who presents to her a part-time, Sunday-only position, serving customers. Eilis, eager to bear some of her own financial weight, eagerly accepts. Before long, however, a far more encompassing happenstance befalls her. Rose, whose social contacts range far afield, has befriended Father Flood, a charismatic priest of local origin, now serving a parish in Brooklyn, visiting his homeland. Father Flood, comprehending the drab life that she leads now and has in store if she lives it out in Enniscorthy, will offer Eilis an opportunity beyond imaging: Brooklyn.

The events that ensue, almost picaresque in sequence, build detail upon detail the evolution of Eilis from a bright but passive village girl to a fresh immigrant brutally homesick in America, to the maturing woman with a foot in each world, finally enabled to decide for herself on which side of the ocean she will cast her lot.

But before anything, with passport, papers, and position, an educational opportunity, and a place to live all secured by Father Flood, Eilis must make her first crossing. Toibin’s chronicle of that storm-tossed voyage is a gruesome extreme in the annals of seasickness, but it serves, as do most of the set pieces in the novel, to showcase Eilis as she confronts the moment, slogs through, moves forward.

Enconced in Brooklyn she manages something of a social life, grounded in the Irish boarding house overseen by the peckish Mrs. Kehoe. She succeeds at her job as a floor clerk in a specialty department store, studying all the while at night for her college degree in accounting. She does charitable work at the church—and if it all sounds a little too female-Horatio-Alger—it isn’t. It is Toibin’s constant gift to present all the subtlety, all the ambivalence, all the conflict of this young woman as she grows into one place and yearns toward another.

Inevitably, there is a man, Tony. He is Italian, not Irish, gentle, patient, comfortable in his skin. Tony is a blue-eyed blond in a swarthy Mediterranean family, an admirer of the Irish lassies in an environment where ethnic

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Sometimes Osher members have commented that they didn’t get into courses they wanted to take. Some have asked if courses are filled first-come, first-served. Others have been curious about how the lottery system works. Once in a while, people have asked if specific courses could be given on days that fit into their personal schedules.

We thought it would be helpful to answer a few questions by reviewing how curriculum planning and registration procedures are linked.

**Scheduling Courses**

Study leaders write course proposals, in which the Curriculum Committee asks them to include preferred days and times for their classes. After all proposals come in, Mary Cay begins to schedule the courses, and she usually is able to accommodate most study leaders’ requests. However, the increasing number of courses that we offer has made scheduling more complex, and in order to create a worthwhile program, the following have to be considered:

**Course Spread:**

Initially, Mary Cay charts courses according to session, days, and times requested by study leaders. Inevitably, certain days and times fill up, preventing the fulfillment of some requests. Because Sally has previously reviewed the course descriptions, we can work together to establish a spread of course topics throughout each day, week, and session that will provide enticing choices for Osher members. Working on the spread involves looking at:

**Similar Courses:**

It is important to make sure that similar courses are taught in different sessions, on different days or at different times so that the courses don’t compete with each other and each course is available to students interested in the specific topics.

**Similar Days or Times**

While some days have filled up, others have schedule “holes” in them. To integrate the few courses that are still not placed, we continue to mix and match until we find satisfactory day and/or time arrangements.

**Confirming Changes**

Before the curriculum plans can be finalized, study leaders must sometimes agree to course schedules that differ from their requests. If our schedule conflicts with their personal calendars, we must make further modifications. And if an instructor has only one day and one time to give a course, we will make plans accordingly. Interestingly, most study leaders have been able to accept scheduling differences we’ve presented to them.

**Space Issues**

During the scheduling process we must consider space and audio/visual requirements for courses. Study leaders whose courses require more hands-on interactions between student, teacher, and materials or who depend on in-depth discussions are asked to specify the maximum number of students they want to teach. Most courses fit into the three spaces that are dedicated to Osher on the CMU campus: the classrooms in Wean hold 35 and 50; the Conference Room in Hunt Library holds approximately 25. All other campus settings, such as Cluster Rooms for computer classes and rooms for courses requiring very large groups must be scheduled through CMU channels and are available to Osher only when CMU students are not using them. Arrangements also have to be made for classes held off-campus.

Once the catalogs come out, it is important to send registration forms back on time.

**Registering for Courses—Why the Lottery Date Is Important:**

Members do not get into courses first-come, first-served. The rank at which you register a course is entered into the computer. On the lottery date, all course lists are reviewed. When fewer people enroll in a class than its room can hold, everyone on the list gets in. Students are added to an “open” course until registration is closed. If rosters are still lower than rooms’ maximum numbers, classes can be filled in as people request them. When the number of students who want to

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enroll in a class exceeds the number a room will hold, a lottery determines who gets in. Ranks are important at this point. For example, if 60 people register for a class in a room that holds 50, priorities come into play. If 40 people ranked the class #1 and 10 ranked it #2, the #1s and #2s will get in. The rest of the names will be put on a waiting list. If people drop out of the course, waiting list names will be chosen by lottery to replace them. For another example, if 35 people have ranked #1 a course whose space holds 35, the #1s will get in, and the others will be on a waiting list. Or if space holds 35, and 40 people ranked the course #1, the #1s will be in a lottery to select 35, and the remaining names will go onto a waiting list.

This process has worked out well. But in order for members to get into courses they request, please do not enroll in a course if you know you will only be able to attend one or two classes. There are people who want to take the entire course but may not get in because they’re on a waiting list. Also, it is extremely important that you drop out of a course if you find you cannot attend regularly, or if for some reason, it is not what you expected. This just requires a brief call to the Osher Office (412-268-7489). Again, you will be opening a space for someone else.

There is a lot that we all have to do to have the curriculum-to-registration/class participation process go as smoothly as possible.

We hope this information has been helpful.

Speaking of Books
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resentment can run high. Eilis, intrigued, resists haste in the relationship, but ultimately makes a commitment. But then... Suddenly called back to Enniscorthy by a death, Eilis must confront all the implications of the present. She returns to her village as a more poised, polished, lovelier version of the self who left. A local man who once spurned her now wishes to be a suitor. A company that once denied her employment desperately needs her freshly educated self to fill a vacancy. The cool waters of the graceful sea contrast vividly to the packed, elbowing beaches of Coney Island. She has pledged to return to Brooklyn, but Enniscorthy now entices with the promise of a future less humdrum than she ever imagined.

Yet it is not idly that the novel is named for a borough and not a village. On the one hand, a surprise of plot, sly but fair, legislates the decision Eilis will make on the question of where to cast her future. On the other hand, it is not simply a turn of events that directs the outcome of this brilliantly developed novel. It is Eilis herself. Slowly, event by event, from that first brutal transatlantic voyage forward, she has absorbed the life she has entered. Step by step she has shed the carapace that has protected her from her own ambitions. She has donned, in its place, the cloak of possibility.

In this novel of character and place, Colm Toibin has accomplished a daring act of point-of-view writing. He has located his narrative completely in the mind and eye of a mouse of a girl who slowly and deliberately develops into a woman. Finally she achieves the tenuous but credible balance between anxiety and determination, passivity and promise. Toibin, by rendering her expanding world view with such a wealth of palpable detail, has created a memorable human being. He has, once more, taken matters close to his own heart, situated them in the mind of a person not himself, in a time and places not his own, and has shaped them into Art. This is a quiet, insistent, wonderful book.
Ruth didn’t want to follow her sister either to Pitt or to a teaching career, and she knew she didn’t want to be a nurse, so she chose the Business Studies curriculum. She learned the material in the secretarial courses, but she wanted more intellectual stimulation. She took violin lessons, cut classes to attend lectures by the esteemed Rabbi Solomon Freehof at the nearby Rodef Shalom temple, attended various churches, and she asked permission to attend Carnegie Tech classes outside of Margaret Morrison College. She was turned down again and again. It just wasn’t done. But Ruth persisted, and so angered Dean Edith Winchester that, Ruth says, “I guess she called me the worst thing she could think of—‘You’re a COMMUNIST!’”

Dean Winchester finally gave in, however, and Ruth audited courses in subjects that interested her in psychology and history. She was usually the only girl in the class but remembers being accepted by male students and teachers without fuss. She did the assignments and wrote papers, which the teachers responded to and graded. She particularly remembers warmly a course about what democracy should be, taught by Professor Norman Dawes at his Squirrel Hill home. Her paper about democracy and the arts earned an A+!

After graduation, Ruth worked as a secretary in her family’s business and after her marriage as secretary for the Drama Department at Carnegie Tech. She enjoyed working with interesting teachers and recalls a wonderful relationship with Henry Boettcher, the department head. When her children were in elementary school, she went back to school and trained as a special-education teacher. Later, with training funded by the Ford Foundation, she became a reading specialist, eventually working as a reading supervisor at the elementary level in the Pittsburgh Public Schools.

And through participation in Osher at CMU and many other activities, Ruth Winer continues learning. At Margaret Morrison College, she says, “I was in the wrong school, taking the wrong subjects.” But now, whether in Margaret Morrison Hall with Nick Lane lecturing about international politics, in Wean Hall studying “Antony and Cleopatra” with Andrew Miller, or staffing Osher at CMU’s reception desk in our Hunt Library office, Ruth Winer is in exactly the right place.
Unexpected Journey: 
A Night and a Day at Shadyside Hospital
By Marilyn McDevitt Rubin

We were just home from two weeks traveling in Europe. Gene caught a cold and a few days later, I got the cold.

On Thursday morning we walked together in Frick Park so that I could sit on a bench in the sun. I remember sitting down and then of becoming aware that I was lying in the grass with people standing and looking down at me.

“Did I faint?” I asked.

Someone walking by with a cell phone had already called 911. Almost before I hit the ground, help was on the way. In minutes a patrol car arrived, followed shortly by a police wagon with two paramedics who hooked me up to fluids, followed almost immediately by an ambulance that drove up beside me, rolled me onto a stretcher, and carried me off.

“We make all stops,” one man said. “Which hospital do you want?” Shadyside seemed closest to home, so I chose it. Off we went.

I was wheeled into the emergency room and examined. I was beginning to feel like a widget on the conveyor belt of life.

“We would like to keep you overnight to monitor your recovery,” a nurse said. That sounded intelligent, so I signed and initialed all the papers she handed me.

Off I went to room 610, bed 1. Next to me was an elderly woman and her middle-aged daughter who slept all night at her mother’s side. They were quiet as mice.

I didn’t sleep that night. One o’clock, two o’clock, three o’clock, four. Occasionally a nurse would ask me to confirm who I was and then check the band on my wrist to see if I was right.

When the day dawned I tried putting on my clothes to go home. Not so fast, miss!

That morning and afternoon, either on a gurney or in a wheelchair, I was pushed and parked to wait for a technician who then administered one test or another.

The unfortunate fact of coming from the park to the hospital began to dawn on me. I had no comb for my wild hair and nothing to read, nothing but television. All I could find of interest was Barack Obama’s speech about Guantanamo, which was repeated so often I can now recite long passages from it by heart. Tick-tock, noon. Tick-tock, two o’clock. Four o’clock. Tick-tock, eight o’clock.

Doctors came, doctors went. Meals came and meals went. I was hungry until I saw the food. I could get the fork to my mouth but I couldn’t eat what I saw.

At 8:30 p.m. I was given a packet of information about myself and sent away to call my doctors. Did I say how nice everyone was? A lovely, sympathetic, caring crew.

At 10 p.m. I fell into my own bed after eating a Dove bar. Tomorrow I’d give the doctors a call. I was feeling just fine.

In fact, as I write this, I feel terrific.

Annual Meeting
Continued from page 3

Foundation. Gloriana has added this award to an endowment fund supporting the Maggie Murph Café in Hunt Library.

President Julian Eligator commented that we now have almost 1,700 members. The goal is to reach 1,800 members by year’s end. When the new Gates building opens this year, we hope to find additional classroom space in Wean Hall. We do not expect membership fees to increase this year.

After lunch, Suzanne Hershey, a charming professional musician and member, who had been entranced by the harp since an early age, gave a brief lecture on the harp and entertained all of us by playing several beautiful selections. Suzanne transports her harp on her own by making use of a modified toboggan in her van!
When Phyllis Davidson, long-time Osher volunteer and new staff member, joined A.L.L. (now Osher) in 2002, she didn’t need a map to find her way around the CMU campus. She’d worked at the university for 18 years.

She knew her way around computers, too. Her work at CMU was in academic computing and information systems, beginning with the mainframes that predated the compact machines on our desks and laps today. She’d had various job titles, retiring as a principal software engineer.

On her new-member form, Phyllis volunteered for data-entry, figuring that she could best use her skills in this category. She began volunteering right away and for several years helped to maintain and improve our databases. When Administrative Coordinator Millie Lynch proposed that we change the way our catalogs are prepared, Phyllis agreed that we could put the catalog together using the database maintained in the office instead of having volunteers enter information in a word-processing program. Because the catalogs are now done this way, duplication is eliminated. The same text about courses and study leaders no longer needs to be entered into both database and word-processing programs. Phyllis has been preparing the catalogs as a volunteer in the office since the Winter-Spring 2008 issue.

On January 1, 2009, Phyllis added to her Osher career. She became the third staff member in Osher’s Hunt Library office, working 20 hours a week as our bookkeeper. As our membership has grown, the tasks such as entering financial information, writing checks, and making deposits have expanded beyond what can be expected of a volunteer, so staff support is needed.

Computer science was a second career for Phyllis. She’d worked as a school paraprofessional, taking advantage of the schedule that gave her vacations when her children were out of school.

Going back to school in 1980, she chose computer science because she wanted an uncrowded field with good opportunities. She enrolled in the Gateway Program at Chatham College and also took some programming courses at CCAC. The job at Carnegie Mellon followed in 1982. On campus she learned about A.L.L. and applied to join when she retired in 2000. After a two-year wait, she joined and checked that box on the new-member form.

Beyond computer science, Phyllis has a broad range of interests. She has taken Osher classes in history, origami, art history, tai chi, “and, of course, classes with Andrew Miller.” And she makes sure there’s time in her busy schedule for spending time with her 15-year-old granddaughter. In all her roles she is a valuable part of Osher at Carnegie Mellon.

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**Fall Registration**

For Fall 2009, Osher is offering more classes to more members than ever before. So meeting deadlines is more important than ever.

- Lottery Deadline is July 6.
- $15 Late Fee required with registration forms received after July 13.
Save the Date!
September 22, 2009
For the first evening lecture in the fall, Joel Tarr, Ph.D., the Richard S. Caliguiri Professor of History and Public Policy at Carnegie Mellon University will speak on "Improving the Pittsburgh Environment: A Century of Slow Change."

Please Note
Dues will no longer be billed with Winter/Spring registration. An invoice for 2010 membership dues will be sent in August. Dues must be paid on time to receive the Winter/Spring catalog.

Contributions are welcome for Signatures, our publication featuring writing and photography by members of Osher at Carnegie Mellon. Please send your material to the Osher office.