Lifelong Learning at CMU: from A.L.L. to Osher

By Joe Scorpion

On September 13, 1992, our lifelong learning program at Carnegie Mellon University was chartered by the university as the Academy for Lifelong Learning or A.L.L. at CMU. It would remain so for 15 years. We started with about 40 participants, and early members reminisce about our headquarters in the leaky basement of CMU’s Alumni House.

In the summer of 2006, as administrative director of A.L.L. I received a phone call from Mary Bitterman, president of the Bernard Osher Foundation in San Francisco, to discuss the possibility of A.L.L. becoming an Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, since the Osher Foundation was aware of our program as an established adult education program that fit their criteria. By that time we had about 1,000 members.

In the fall of that year Mary Bitterman got back to me with a proposal that the Osher Foundation would offer us a $100,000 grant to help us expand our program. Acceptance of this grant depended on two stipulations: first, that we change our name from A.L.L. to the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) at Carnegie Mellon, and second, that our sponsoring institution (CMU) could not directly use any money received from the Osher Foundation.

The proposal was presented to our A.L.L. board of directors for review and approval but was met with resistance from several board members because of the request for the name change and the possible loss of identity. Eventually, after much discussion, the board finally voted to accept the proposal and to formally become a part of the Osher family. Continued on page 8

“SEEN” at the Osher at CMU Annual Picnic

By Filomena Conti

What better way to spend a lovely late summer evening than under the big white tent on the Carnegie Mellon campus? About 180 Osher members did just that on August 25. With Marlene Haus as chair of the event, we enjoyed a wonderful buffet with baked chicken as the main course.

Some of us got to sing for our supper by participating in a variety of “intellectual” games—drawing, singing, storytelling, and scripting; some of us came just to have fun, and we did. It was a wonderful opportunity to sit and socialize with fellow members and anticipate our Continued on page 8

Inside This Issue

Holiday Party
Phytastic Food
Conversations with Teachers
The Spahrk of Life
A Pittsburgh Prodigy
Evening Lectures

Fall 2014
From The President

By Joe Shirk

Wow! It was six months ago that I was elected president of this wonderful organization. Time really flies when you are having fun—and Osher at CMU is the place to have fun—especially if you take advantage of all the programs that we and the university offer you.

We had fun at the annual picnic with Joe Lagnee’s swing band, the volunteers’ ice cream social, the City of Asylum lecture, and Jim Cunningham’s wonderful presentation on “Opera through the Hollywood Lens.” Aside from our enjoyable lectures and events, there are some one-session classes that explore very special offerings from this wonderful university that hosts our program.

As we now enter the holiday (holy days) season, we all have so much to be thankful for. Can you imagine being retired and living in a community without a program similar to Osher to stimulate your mind and to provide social interaction with like-minded individuals? We are so fortunate to have this opportunity here at CMU.

I am thankful that we had members who had the foresight 22 years ago to start the Academy for Lifelong Learning, which was the seed that brought us to where we are today. I am also thankful for Bernard Osher, whose philanthropic efforts led to the creation and support to over 100 Osher programs in the United States, allowing our program to benefit from the security of continued financial support through the earnings on the $2,000,000 endowment given to Carnegie Mellon University for our benefit.

We all should be thankful for Carnegie Mellon University’s hosting Osher. It is perhaps the premier of the top-tier universities hosting an Osher program. As members of Osher at CMU, we benefit from the ability to attend numerous lectures at the university, world-class performances by the Carnegie Mellon Philharmonic (free with your Osher ID), as well as numerous other musical recitals and performances. Another bonus for our members is the ability to attend plays produced and performed by Carnegie Mellon’s School of Drama—another world-class offering. For $10 and your Osher ID, you can attend their productions on weekdays.

As we have grown over the years from a handful of members to over 2,000, handling the day-to-day administrative duties have shifted from a volunteer operation to a small but effective paid administrative staff. I am thankful for their professionalism and dedication to serve our members. Can you imagine a job where you have over 2,000 bosses, hundreds of interruptions a day, and where you have to coordinate over 500 classes and lectures a year? I believe we all should be thankful for all the hard work and professionalism of our office staff.

And finally, we would not exist as a viable program without the hundreds of volunteers who give their time to teach, assist teachers, proof and edit articles and catalogues, serve on committees, stuff envelopes, and provide guidance for our program. Our uniqueness as a volunteer Osher organization sets us apart from most other programs in the country. I am thankful for your individual efforts in making Osher@CMU the success that it is today.

From left, Registrar/Manager Lyn Decker and Assistant Registrar Chris Dashti at the study leaders training session in October
Osher Holiday Party

Tuesday, December 16th
Noon at the PAA

With entertainment by the Readers’ Theater Class!

Entrée Choices:  Mediterranean Chicken Breast — $27
Tomato, Olives, Artichokes, Roasted Peppers, Lemon Olive Oil, Scalloped Potatoes
with Onion Confit

Single Lump Crab Cake — $30
Roasted Corn and Chipotle Pepper Purée, Lemon Aioli, Scalloped Potatoes with
Onion Confit

Roasted Vegetable Ravioli — $22
Vodka Tomato Cream Sauce

All entrées are served with a Mixed Green Salad and a Sugar Toasted Pecan Ball.

Reservations are due by Thursday, December 4th. Limited valet parking is available for $8 per car. Reserve and pay (Osher Events, Holiday Party) online, by calling 412-268-7489 with a credit card, or mail below portion to Osher at CMU, Hunt Library, 4909 Frew St, Pittsburgh, PA 15213.

Reservations are non-refundable.

2014 Holiday Party

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Where can you taste and savor delectable food, learn about adaptable tips for healthy eating, try foods you’ve never tried before, and enjoy yourself in the process? Register for the Osher course “Phytastic Cooking: Maximizing the Healthfulness of Your Meals,” taught by Donna Hansen.

Phytastic cooking is cooking with phytonutrients, which are active, non-essential compounds in plants that provide health benefits when eaten. Even picky eaters will find a favorite among the interesting and varied dishes from the following categories: cruciferous vegetables, orange and yellow fruits and vegetables, red and blue fruits and vegetables, dark green leafy vegetables, and whole grains.

The mouthwatering menu for one of the classes was warm farro cereal with coconut, almonds, and cherries; chipotle carrot, avocado and kamut salad; roasted pumpkin with chicken apple sausage; and wheat berry Waldorf salad. Every dish was substantial, hearty, and more delicious than the one before.

We learned that Kamut (pronounced ka moot) is an ancient wheat variety that is certified organic and 99% free of contamination by modern wheat varieties. It is high in protein and amino acids. It is also high in essential fatty acids, which can help lower LDL (bad) cholesterol and raise HDL (good) cholesterol. Kamut is particularly high in the B vitamins magnesium, phosphorous, and zinc. We learned about nine other ancient grains, some of which are even gluten free.

In addition to her wealth of knowledge and pleasant demeanor, Donna included special touches that made this class instructive and enjoyable. During her food preparation she demonstrated to each student selected foods we may never have seen before. In every class we were given a packet that included copies of recipes along with two or more pages of health benefits and related health information.

She both stimulated and answered many and various questions related to food choices and preparation, even the growing of food, as when our discussion turned to growing basil. Come to this class and learn about the phytonutrients rainbow, recommended calories and fruits and vegetable intake, GMOs, healthy eating for older adults, and ancient grains. Expand your vocabulary with words and phrases like farro, kamut, freekah, and dinosaur kale. For stimulation of both palate and mind alike, register for this class.

(Editor’s note: You may have to wait until next fall!)

After the meal demonstration that often includes appetizer, salad, entrée, and dessert, Osher students savor the delectable recipes. During taste-test time, Donna Hanson answers questions and shares adaptable, healthy, eating tips.

Donna spreads a colorful ratatouille of purple eggplant, red peppers, green zucchini, and yellow squash over white fish. The healthy combination of hot veggies cooks the fish as it rests in the pan.

Photos by Leslie Evans
Three Conversations About Osher Classes
By Joan Gaul

We applauded at the end of “Latin American Short Stories,” Keith McDuffie’s six-week summer course. Then McDuffie applauded us and said appreciatively, “You talk.” He was the second full-time or retired academic from whom I’d inferred that younger students are less responsive than Osher folks. We talk, but what other differences might there be? To learn, I spoke with Keith McDuffie, retired from the University of Pittsburgh as professor and chair of Hispanic Languages and Literature, who taught his first Osher course; Andrew Miller, retired classics professor at Pitt, from whom I took many Osher courses; and David Shumway, professor of English and Literary and Cultural Studies and director of the Humanities Center at CMU, whose “Modern Love” and “More Love” courses I have taken.

There was consensus that Osher students do talk more than college mates, certainly more than undergraduates, with few exceptions. Students talk in David Shumway’s Humanities Scholars class on love, courtship, and marriage that ranges from Plato and Euripides to Woody Allen. Andrew Miller spoke of the 20 kids at Pitt to whom he taught Gilgamesh and Dante in the early 80s: “The chemistry, empathy was there.” Miller then admitted, “I never said a word as an undergraduate. It was painful to be called on.” He continued, “Typical undergraduates tend to be shy. They have lived less, have less experience that would evoke a response.” Other reasons for the difference? Miller mentioned the prevalence of undergraduate lecture courses as possibly promoting a silent audience. McDuffie said, “They don’t read newspapers.” He found that undergrads seemed to be becoming increasingly narrow; they come with an ideology rather than a point of view.

Reading demands responses. McDuffie, noting that those at Osher were “more experienced in life and reading,” said that at Osher the reading is not mandatory. Students do it because they want to, “Self-motivated, the best motivation of all.” Shumway said, “Osher students bring a wider range of cultural references. They come with a lifetime of experience. Younger students have ideas but not a lot of experience.” Shumway commented that Osher people want to be there. Undergrads and grads are often there because they need a course. Students often have a lot else on their minds.”

Anything else about teaching at Osher? “On the downside,” said Andrew Miller, “people can talk too freely about the irrelevant, and then it’s a matter of how you handle it. A teacher is trying to pursue a line of thought.”

David Shumway, who leads a discussion group at the Peters Township library, feels that Osher classes are not a discussion group. They are a class, and he is there to teach. If it feels like a lecture on his part, early on, there is a curve, and it becomes more of a discussion as the class progresses. In Osher he has not run into anyone who talked too much or monopolized. Keith McDuffie hasn’t either, but he has heard horror stories.

Chemistry in the classroom came up again. “The luck of the draw,” Andrew Miller called it, “Sometimes one or two can make a difference, good or bad.” Keith McDuffie allowed that he would be happy to teach if there were only one or two students, and they were good ones.

College students must attend class. Absenteeism is a downside of teaching at Osher. Absentees are a problem for a teacher who is trying for continuity. In connection with empty seats, David Shumway mentioned “all those people who can’t get into the program.” Shumway understands problems with schedules, appointments, and so forth, but wonders if it is because Osher doesn’t cost much.

McDuffie wondered whether people simply sign up for too many courses. His class “began with 24 and ended with 12, but 12 good ones.” It was difficult for continuity, but there were people in the

continued on page 10
The Spahrk Of Life: An Osher Study Leader
By Joan Morse Gordon

“It’s such a delicious feeling to see people drawing,” enthuses Judy Spahr when speaking of her Osher class. Small, compact and energetic, Judy’s ebullience is contagious. She tells her students in the sun-bright, airy studio in the CMU Fine Arts building. “You don’t just draw a chair...you feel it. You should feel contour, gesture, movement.” “They’re bright! Retired doctors, teachers, engineers, social workers...they’re beginning to see things. It’s awesome to see them...people who never drew before!” To one woman who says she is afraid, Judy says, “Look! You’re drawing! Stay with it.”

Judy has stayed with it, starting at two, along with identical twin Trudy whose talent has been directed more to fashion design. They were musical, as well, with Trudy playing the harp and Judy the violin. Judy took Saturday morning Tam O’Shanter classes, along with 800 other children ages nine to eleven, at the Carnegie Museum. She describes how, given crayons and pencils, sitting in the Music Hall, they were taught about shading and coloring by a Mr. Fitzgerald. And there was an Honor Roll to aspire to. Judy’s artist husband, Ed Spahr, to whom she’s been married for 25 years, attended and made it, as did both his parents.

Judy and Trudy found Carnegie Tech “a miracle.” There were classes in history, English, and philosophy, but the emphasis was on art, on drawing. They dressed alike, and sometimes mischievously switched dates.

Her first marriage produced three sons, two of whom produced twins as well. A divorce after 25 years left her wondering where to head next. She already had her BFA, but she decided that an MSW degree in social work, inspired by the late Barbara Shore, was the way to go. As a specialist in geriatrics, she found her first job, naturally, with children. But she wound up spending 16 years working with patients throughout McKeesport Hospital and developing an ongoing stroke-support group.

After retiring in 2005, encouraged by Helen Faye Rosenblum, she reverted to her old passion and started teaching drawing in our Osher program.

In class Judy feels her students’ energy as well as her own. She shares their joy in self-discovery. Some have difficult lives. She uses her skill as a social worker to help them get lost in their work and find their world enriched.

Get Together
On a Regular Basis.
With Osher Friends.
At Varied Restaurants.

Osher’s Urban Dining Group gives members the opportunity to share a monthly dining-out experience in Pittsburgh restaurants. This is a newly formed special interest group currently chaired by Brian Weller. The 2015 schedule will be available soon. Please check our website, www.cmu.edu/osopher, for details as they become available!


The dining group tries a Chinese restaurant.
A Rare Pittsburgh Memory...Pittsburgh's Prodigy
By Mercedes Monjian

We were all settled in the long Exhibition Hall at Carnegie Tech, awaiting the arrival of our professor, who doubled as our maestro, Dr. Frederick Dorian. The entire Music Department chorus and orchestra had assembled to rehearse our annual spring concert, which always highlighted a major choral work—that year, Beethoven’s Missa Solemnis, if I remember correctly.

When the door opened, what a surprise it was to see our distinguished, Vienna-born professor enter side-by-side with a small boy weighted down by a large briefcase. Exquisitely dressed for his age, he wore an impeccably tailored double-breasted brown suit, appropriate for any board meeting in corporate Pittsburgh.

![Dr. Dorian](image)

Dr. Dorian stepped to the podium and announced that Master Lorin Maazel would be conducting the first sections of the Beethoven, adding that he was a brilliant young Pittsburgh musician, excelling in violin and conducting. Our unexpected guest pulled a score and baton from his briefcase, then mounted the podium. At close range now, he seemed to be sizing us up while we, in turn, scrutinized his serious face and large intelligent eyes that matched a mop of dark brown hair. Although probably ten years old, he looked younger, but his poise and confident stance indicated a maturity commanding our immediate respect.

If there were any doubts about his ability, they vanished as he raised his baton and cued in the voices, the violins, the horns, with an elegant certainty usually acquired, if at all, after years of study. When he had finished, we broke into wild applause. Only then did he treat us to a slight sliver of a smile, accompanied by a slight bow. Dr. Dorian came forward to shake hands quite formally and point to a nearby chair where young Maazel sat watching and listening to our maestro work us through some difficult passages. The rehearsal over, and amid the din of chairs scraping over the floor, I watched both virtuoso and maestro leave the hall together in deep discussion as if they had been longtime colleagues.

**AFTERWARD**

Four summers ago, I phoned into WQED-FM a shortened version of this story. At its conclusion, Jim Sweeney’s producer remarked, “Imagine if you were a music student of 20 or 21, you would probably be wondering what you were doing there.” They both chuckled.

This past summer, 2013, I heard Maazel on WQED-TV conducting the Vienna Philharmonic in front of the Schönbrunn Palace, just outside Vienna. Accolades and honors later, having conducted every major symphony orchestra in the world, he has earned the title of “taskmaster,” displaying a bit of hauteur, a drive toward perfection, a prodigious memory, and, if we can believe Robert Croan, “an unparalleled baton technique.”

Mercedes Monjian, an early member of our lifelong learning program at CMU, joined A.L.L. (now Osher) in 1994, its second year. A Ph.D. in Victorian literature, she was a study leader in courses in Romantic and Victorian literature. Her work has been included in our Signatures publication. This article appeared in The Long View, a publication of Longwood at Oakmont, the retirement community where Mercedes lives. This article was published three months before Maazel’s death in July 2013.
Lifelong Learning at CMU: From A.L.L to Osher

Continued from page 1

In 2007 we changed the name of our program and joined 117 other colleges and universities across the USA offering noncredit courses for adults. We then received the initial grant of $100,000. To my surprise, that check was made out to me; it was promptly deposited with the CMU university treasurer.

Over the last seven years, the Bernard Osher Foundation has proven to be a most-generous supporter of Osher at Carnegie Mellon University. In the ensuing years, CMU received two million dollars to invest on our behalf. While the two million belongs to CMU’s endowment, annually we receive investment returns to help offset our ongoing expenses. As of this writing, our coffers have been increased by $198,143 through the investment returns.

Adding it all up, joining the Osher family has given us almost $400,000 and an ongoing income stream. In addition, we have benefited from excellent support systems through both the Bernard Osher Foundation and the Osher National Resource Center. We have also made many friends among the 119 other Osher Lifelong Learning Institutes (OLLIs) across the USA. We look forward to a continued relationship with the Bernard Osher Foundation.

“SEEN” at Our Osher Annual Picnic

Continued from page 1

classes for the fall semester. Joe Lagnese and Swingtet 8 provided entertainment with the history and music of the 1950s big swing bands. It was nostalgic for a lot of us.

Among the attendees “seen” at this event were Rosemarie and Joe Shirk, Bonnie Cohen, Jean Prantl, Rita Zecher, Judy Rubenstein, Betsy Martin, Jean Peterson, Ruth Westerman and Bob Myers, Marcia Frumerman, Byron Gottfried, Lyn and Joe Decker, Rochelle Steiner, Fran and Alan Lefkowitz, Janice Rosenberg, Joan Morse Gordon, Bernice Levine, Barb and Tito Braunstein, Leslie Evans, Suzanne Flood, Ruth Reidbord, Eileen and John Olmsted, Judy Spahr, and many more.

At the picnic: above, left, enjoying the buffet; right, Marlene Haus, chair of the event, greeting the crowd; below, left, gamers before supper; right, Swingtet 8 entertainers.
The following article was published in the Carnegie Mellon’s Library Dean’s Office Digest. It was written by Joe Shirk and Gloriana St. Clair.

In an effort to increase the visibility of Osher Lifelong Learning at Carnegie Mellon University with the more traditional-aged students, President Joe Shirk decided that OLLI should engage in a well-known campus tradition—painting the fence in the middle of campus. After some exploration of the traditions and prohibitions around painting the fence, Shirk did what any other Carnegie Mellon student would have done—he innovated and painted the fence virtually, with the help of his constant companion Havanese Renfrew, a dog on the Internet.

The Fence commemorates a bridge that once crossed a real valley between the Carnegie Institute of Technology, an engineering men’s school, and the Margaret Morrison women’s school. Students in both organizations recognized the strategic nature of the bridge as a place to meet each other.

The original wooden fence now exists only in fragments in University Archives. Its concrete replacement competes for the record as the most painted-upon object in the world. Messages on the fence vary from proposals of marriage to event notices to recognitions of extraordinary lives. In the photo at the top, the fence painters memorialize the late CMU professor Randy Pausch, author of The Last Lecture.

The student government maintains a rigorous set of traditions around the fence:

- Must be painted between midnight and 6 a.m.
- Must be guarded by a representative on the small gravel area around it to prevent repainting by another group.
- Must be painted by hand using brushes, with spray painters being cited for vandalism.

These rules were more daunting to the OLLI group than to other student organizations.

Shirk’s response involved the use of Photoshop and YouTube. He and his dog companion Renfrew were able to achieve their objective during daylight hours using the family’s Mac. While the painted fence often only proclaims its message for 24 hours, Shirk’s approach is longer lasting and more easily shared.

Below is the end result of the virtual fence painting activity:

To see the Fence Painting, go to:
https://vimeo.com/101879896
Three Conversations About Osher Teachers
Continued from page 5

class he relied on. “Sparse attendance can be discouraging, but the interest of some overcomes that.”

Andrew Miller, who now teaches in the Academy for Lifelong Learning (ALL) affiliated with Western Washington University in Bellingham, notices little absenteeism. In his current ALL program people pay to join and pay $80 to $90 per course. WWU provides an office and a staff person, but ALL has to pay for class space. He notes that CMU’s generosity with space keeps the cost down.

Age difference, experience, and absenteeism aside, it was clear that these men enjoyed teaching at the college level and at Osher. David Shumway, who still carries a full academic load, was asked why he decided to add Osher. His answer was that academics teach classes and write books which probably aren’t much read. They have ideas that they would like to take to an audience. They are ambitious to be heard. “Osher classes are a good place to bounce off ideas.”

McDuffie felt “rich experiences enrich the class. I never got the feeling I was carrying you all on my back.” Andrew Miller said it is

Osher Study Leaders and Volunteers Treated at Ice Cream Social

Osher volunteers and study leaders were celebrated at the Ice Cream Social on Friday, August 8, at the First Unitarian Church in Shadyside. In addition to the tasty refreshments and the good company, study leaders and committee chairs were invited to speak about their roles and experience in Osher. Above, socializing; right, at the microphone: top, Rabbi Alvin Berkun, a study leader; below, Osher board member and study leader Errol Miller.
Courtesy Reminders for Osher Members

We enjoy a wide range of excellent courses at a world-class university because of our benefactors and volunteers. Our students are sincerely interested and supportive of our lifelong learning program. Inevitably, though, we do get a few complaints in our “suggestion box” about Osher student behaviors. Please see if you can avoid these student pitfalls:

Taking more than your fair share of class time
You find yourself speaking in class significantly more than anyone else. Divide your comments by the number of students in the class and speak only for your fair share of the time. Often another classmate will express a view you share anyway. If you have more to say, arrange to meet after class.

Using class evaluation to complain
Study leaders can do little with negative feedback unless it is accompanied by suggestions for one or several alternatives. Please use evaluation forms for constructive criticism. Think of what would help you if you were on the receiving end of the evaluation.

We hope these courtesy reminders will help you and all students be mindful of others in our community as you enjoy your own personal Osher experience.

Old World Prague & the Blue Danube

Osher@CMU and Grand Circle again team up to offer members and guests the opportunity to cruise the Blue Danube from Budapest to Prague. The trip will depart September 14, 2015.

The cost is from $5,035 and includes airfare from Pittsburgh, 28 meals, 7 tours, onboard wine & beverages with meals, gratuities, port charges, etc. Optional tours/trips are offered.

This year 10 Osher@CMU members/guests took advantage of our 2014 European River Cruise.

Contact the office for a flyer or call 1-800-597-2452 and press “2.” Mention code G5-25338.

Coming Attractions

Evening Lectures

Tues., Feb. 17, 2015, 7:30 p.m.
“Sleep Health”
David J. Buysse, M.D.
University of Pittsburgh Sleep Medicine Institute

Wed., March 18, 2015, 7:30 p.m.
“Why Are Iran’s Nuclear Technology Efforts of Critical Concern to Israel’s Security?”
Mike Natelson, retired nuclear scientist, Westinghouse Corp.

Lectures will be held in McConomy Auditorium, Cohon University Center.

Members’ Holiday Party
Tuesday, December 16, 2014
12 noon, PAA
Watch for details!
Published once per trimester for members of Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Carnegie Mellon

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