Tribute to Mark Kamlet and Tasty Picnic Initiate New School Year
By Marlene Haus
Membership Chair

It was hot, very hot on Tuesday, September 1, when 144 members of Osher at CMU turned out for the annual Back-To-School Picnic on the CMU campus. This event kicks off the fall semester of classes. Members renew old friendships and spark new ones.

In a short business meeting preceding the picnic, the board and membership voted to amend some wording in the by-laws.

President Joe Shirk then introduced Mark Kamlet, former CMU provost and executive vice president, and his family who were present. Gloriana St. Clair read a tribute to Mark Kamlet, thanking him for his support of Osher at CMU from its inception through its long association with the university. A special panel honoring Mark Kamlet and his wife, Charlee Brodsky, has been placed on the wall in the Maggie Murph Café in Hunt Library next to the window that looks out on the Peace Garden.

Under the large white tent donated by CMU, picnickers sat at round tables beautifully decorated with vases of fresh flowers and glimmering tea-light candles.

Then "music was in the air" as Joe Lagnese (a current study leader) and his band, Swingtet 8 plus, began their repertoire of familiar band tunes. The Membership Committee and many volunteers distributed pre-ordered boxed dinners to everyone. Not an

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Osher National Conference Features Many Highlights
By Lyn Decker,
Executive Director / Registrar

Wow! The Osher National Conference was fantastic this year. President Joe Shirk and I came away with a number of immediately implementable ideas, met up with Osher friends from before, met a lot of new people from many of the OLLIs across the country, met the new Osher National Resource Center team, and reconnected with members of the Osher Foundation, including Mr. Bernard Osher himself.

Every conference begins with each of the OLLIs sharing a Wow! or
From The President

By Joe Shirk

What’s going on here?

Volunteers:

Here at Osher, there is so much more than someone teaching a class or someone taking your call at the office. There are hundreds of activities done by hundreds of volunteers. We are an all-volunteer organization—of the more than 2,200 members, almost 600 volunteer their services and time each year to make our program a success.

Some members volunteer for a few hours a year, some for hundreds of hours a year. These volunteers are in addition to our three-person paid staff, who handle all of the day-to-day duties and details required to run a successful program.

The Executive Committee, the Board of Directors, and various committee chairs spend time each week developing policies and working on new ideas that set the framework of our super-successful program. Many volunteers do double or triple duty. Some are on committees, teach classes, and then come into the office to work or help at the front desk.

My best estimate is that the value we receive from our volunteers is in the neighborhood of $400,000 annually. This is value added to the $350,000 or so we pay for renting space, printing catalogues, computer expenses, payroll, etc. This means that Osher at CMU is actually getting twice the value for every dollar we receive through membership fees and income from the Osher Foundation endowment. As a volunteer, in whatever role you feel comfortable, you add much more to the program than you can possibly imagine.

Program Awareness:

One of my pet projects has been to increase the awareness of our program here on the CMU campus. We now have developed a program identity logo for use in promoting our program on campus. It will be used as a lapel pin to identify the 2,200+ individual members in the program as they mingle with the students while going to and from their Osher classes.

The design is similar to the POP art screen-print style inspired by CMU alumnus Andy Warhol (the school was Carnegie Tech at the time). This image represents the teaching, learning, and socialization opportunities developed by the Osher Lifelong Learning Institutes. Close inspection will reveal the images of our benefactors—Andrew Carnegie and Bernard Osher—in the design.

The pin, pictured below, will be in color and will be available in mid-December. Members who want to wear the pin should stop by the office to pick one up. Although they are free to members, a small donation will help pay for the $2 retail cost of the pin. If the pins prove to be successful, we will reorder more.

Interest Groups:

Last year’s National Osher Conference brought up the idea of forming special interest groups where members with common interests get together to pursue their interest. So far we have a bridge group, a dining group, a patron of the arts group, and are considering an Italian conversation group to start soon. If you have an idea for such a group (bird watching, genealogy, hiking, etc.), let the office know and we continued on page 5
Osher National Conference Highlights
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Woo Hoo! from their program. This year our New Instructor Orientation was highlighted. Six times a year, we introduce new instructors to our organization by inviting them to a “Meet, Eat, Greet.” During these gatherings we talk about successful ways to handle a course, teach how to use our AV system, and give newcomers a chance to mingle with seasoned instructors. We serve cookies and coffee, show a PowerPoint presentation about the Osher Institute, and invite everyone to talk briefly about themselves and their courses.

Other OLLIs shared information about their most popular classes, trips, special interest groups, and celebrations. A favorite of mine was an OLLI Antique Fest where members brought in antiques to be appraised as is done on the popular TV Antiques Road Show.

The first plenary session we attended was about the laws of having crucial conversations. The message was that “anytime you find yourself stuck, there’s a crucial conversation you’re either not holding or not holding well.” The lessons learned could be applied at home, in the classroom, or just among friends. For example, if you find that a discussion is going in circles, it is important to first find out what everyone can agree on. Then try to recognize the purpose behind what is wanted or needed. “Why do you want ____?” or “This is what I want ______.” Invent a mutual purpose: “So, if you get ___ and I get ____, we’re both happy?”

Tip One: Get Unstuck.
Tip Two: Start with Heart. The first step toward better results is a change in heart—which begins when you admit that you may be part of the problem.
Tip Three: Learn to Look. Watch for the signs that a conversation is turning crucial. Remember, the sooner you catch problems, the sooner you can return to a good dialogue.

I co-ran a breakout session called “Finding the Right Online Registration Software.” The major takeaway from this popular session was that the world of registration systems appropriate for a member-driven organization, such as Osher, is limited. It seems that all registration systems have glitches, bugs, and malfunctions, and we have to just keep bugging our providers with what we need our system to do. All of the other Oshers either have gone to an online registration system or are going to one within the next 12 months. Our system, even with its problems, is still probably the best on the market.

Joe and I both attended a session about planning for large events in order to see what others did or are doing to plan for their big anniversaries. Since our 25th is coming up in 2017, we saw this as an opportunity to gather some ideas. The big takeaway from this session was to start to plan early, and instead of having one main event, hold a number over the course of the year.

The session about volunteers was terrific. Starting next year, one of my main focuses will be on how to better recognize and honor our many volunteers.

This three-day, two-night conference is held every 18 months. This year the conference was held at the Ballantyne Hotel in Charlotte, North Carolina. The Osher Foundation picks up all costs except travel to and from the conference for two people from each of the 119 OLLIs.
The Olmsted Phenomenon
By Joan Morse Gordon

Who would have thought that a class called “Improve your Party Bridge Skills” would generate 70 players who now meet outside of class at least twice a week to relax and chat and laugh at the bridge table? It seems that there are many of us who enjoyed bridge at college and later, who, intimidated by the serious, no-nonsense atmosphere at duplicate table, have taken to John Olmsted’s tutelage with glee.

John, a Californian, came East with a scholarship to Carnegie Tech, then went back to California where he taught physical chemistry at Cal State Fullerton. While here, as an undergraduate, he was a member of the Carnegie Tech intercollegiate champion bridge team, a skill he had developed from childhood playing with his parents. He and his partner finished fifth in the American Contract Bridge League open pairs competition in Pittsburgh in 1958.

Nine years ago, on retiring, he gave his wife, Eileen, a choice: Build her a dream house there, or return to Pittsburgh to be close to their son and daughter-in-law and grandchildren. We are forever grateful for Eileen’s decision.

Serving on the Osher Curriculum Committee, while discussing Special Interest Groups, John suggested he teach party bridge, which he saw “as an anodyne to the woes of old age.” And so it came to pass. His delighted students bemoaned the fact that they needed time to practice after class. “We’ll forget.” And so he arranged for time and space at CMU for Saturday morning workshops during which he would be there to field all questions.

Soon, even more time to practice seemed needed. And so weekly games on Thursdays at two different Paneras were added to John’s schedule. And from there, a further proliferation into games in people’s homes. Gloriana St. Clair was inspired to create a get-together of “silvergirls” who play weekly as a “bridge over troubled waters.” Joan Bernard has an additional foursome at Panera’s.

Referring to John’s detailed “cheat sheet” of up-to-date bridge rules and scoring, we are told by him in many questionable cases to “lie.” When playing on our own, we ask “WWJD?” which in this case means “What would John do?” No matter how dismal one’s partner’s “dummy” might be, we always say “Thank you, partner!” The bridge table offers a means of face-to-face communication which a classroom situation lacks. A non-competitive and friendly atmosphere, a time to get closer, to share a lifetime of experience, to expand our acquaintances for many of us who live alone. “Improve your party skills” has proved to be a most successful Special Interest at Osher.

To Age Well, Change How You Feel About Aging

For Joe Shirk, an article about aging by Anne Tergesen in the October 19 Wall Street Journal underscored the value of our lifelong learning program. Scientists are discovering something very peculiar about aging: “How we feel about getting old matters. A lot!” To age well, change how you feel about aging. There is a myth that aging is associated with decline; however, surveys have shown that those 65 years old and older actually report a better response to questions about their quality of life than those of a younger age group.

Over the past two decades, dozens of studies from psychologists, medical doctors, and neuroscientists have shown that older people with more-negative views of aging fare worse than those with less-pessimistic attitudes.

Actually, studies found that those aged 65+ experience fewer problems with memory loss, ability to drive, illness, depression, etc., than are expected by those in younger age groups looking to the future.

By taking Osher classes featuring physical activity and by attending Osher classes with like-minded mature adults discovering new experiences (like playing bridge), we can see and feel that our experiences in retirement contradict the stereotypes we may have been trained to expect.
will publicize the idea to the membership. The idea is not for the office to organize the group, but just to be the vehicle for publicizing and communicating the group’s activities. Each group is responsible for organizing and managing its events.

Bernard Osher:
Our program, formerly the Academy for Lifelong Learning (A.L.L.), now the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI), is named after Bernard Osher. You may ask, “Who is he?” While at the annual National Osher Conference, Executive Director Lyn Decker and I had the opportunity to meet Mr. Osher. His Osher Foundation has provided our program with a $2 million endowment for our benefit. The earnings from this endowment support our organization.

In the November 26, 2007, issue of Business Week, Mr. Osher was listed as the 11th most generous philanthropist in the world. The article cited the $805 million that he had given to arts, education, and social services. He also contributes by offering scholarships that assist women to re-enter college after dropping out of school to have children or to work. This is in addition to the funding of Osher programs throughout the country. He gives a larger portion of his wealth to his causes than other philanthropists with similar wealth.

Mr. Osher plans to give away his entire fortune, as he has no heirs, but he would enjoy the opportunity to help members of several generations lead more fulfilling lives through his contributions.

At the Osher National Conference, every morning we witnessed Mr. Osher doing vigorous physical fitness exercises in the hotel workout room for over an hour. He is truly an inspiration. At 80 years of age he learned to play the piano. Like each of us, he is the model to others that you are never too old to learn—you can teach an old dog new tricks!

Mobility:
An issue that impacts many of us—or perhaps soon will—is the issue of mobility. It can be a challenge for many to easily get to and from home to campus, and then to classes here on campus. Although the campus is completely ADA compliant, it does not mean that all members can get around as easily as we once did. As our population continues to live longer, the mobility issues begin to grow. We have formed a committee, headed by Gloriana St. Clair, to investigate the issues and possible solutions. This is not an easy issue as there are liability, financial, and legal issues to solve or consider. The committee, in conjunction with the university and various outside agencies, are devoting much time to efforts to help ease the mobility problems. Nothing can be promised, but we are committed to do what we can to attempt to find solutions to mitigate the problems.

Osher Holiday Party
Tuesday, December 15
12 Noon
Twentieth Century Club

Bernard Osher and Joe Shirk at the Osher National Conference

Stuart Olmsted, director of operations for global research talent and a senior natural scientist at the RAND Corporation, with his father, John, at the RAND lecture on October 29.

Stuart Olmsted gave an overview of what RAND is, what it does, and how it came to have a major office in Pittsburgh. He then introduced three RAND researchers who described projects they are working on.
David Fortun: A Man For All Seasons
By Filomena Conti

After a 36-year career teaching English at the Shaler Area High School, David Fortun did not let the grass grow under his feet. In addition to teaching a class weekly at Shaler for students with special needs, he became an Osher study leader. Now in his ninth year, he has taught an etymology course numerous times. His students have learned the derivation and history of a wealth of words.

Also, David is a docent at PNC Park and a lifelong baseball buff. He has given an Osher course on this subject, which includes a guided tour of the Pirates' home base. Currently he is teaching a course on Mitch Albom's book The People You Meet in Heaven. He asks students to think about how reading the book stimulates their recollection of an incident in their own lives.

With wife Charlene, two sons and three grandchildren, and his many activities, it can be said he's enjoying a full, satisfying life. But wait, there's more! About ten years ago, a friend, Dr. Jack Demos, a now-retired plastic surgeon at Allegheny General Hospital, asked if David would be interested in volunteering for Surgicorps International, a non-profit organization which provides free surgical and medical care for children with disabilities in developing nations. Within a month David was in Brazil.

Since then, every year in August David flies with a Surgicorps surgical team to Guatemala. Doing what? He's not a surgeon, anesthesiologist, or nurse, who make up the team he's now a part of. One might say "gofer," "expeditor," "facilitator." He's all of these; he is the first nonmedical person to accompany such a team. His duties include preparing the patients for surgery, seeing they get their meals, making sure they have some fun (the team includes toys with the surgical supplies they bring).

When they arrive in Guatemala City, a van takes them to a hospital in nearby Antigua, where once a schedule is made, the team performs surgery from morning to night all week. David handles the logistics, preparing the operating room for each surgery.

One more thing: David has to keep healthy. One way he does this is by rising at 4 a.m. each morning and jogging around his neighborhood for a half hour.

Osher is proud to have David Fortun on its roster.

Back-To-School Picnic
Continued from page 1

easy task. They pulled carts full of boxes to the tables and made certain that each person received the correct meal—a lot of walking and pulling, all done with a smile.

Osher at CMU can be proud of its membership. So many people outside of the Membership Committee volunteered to help with this event. Proud, too, of the Osher board, who supported this event; a wonderful Membership Committee, whose ideas are so innovative; and a great staff—Lyn, Chris, and Chelsea—always ready to help.

Thanks and gratitude to all who helped make the picnic a success: Francine Abraham, Joan Barnard, Susan Bates, Linda Bishoff, Dolores Blumstein, Circe Curley, Rhoda Eligator, Dick Fisher, Sue Gibbon, Ann Giorgi, Roz Goorin, Dorothy Greenberg, Ken Kynski, Dee Dee Kaufmann, Betsy Martin, Sibby McCrady, Peggy Mills, Nancy Murin, Susan Parker, Marla Perlman, Rhoda Sikov, Rochelle Steiner, Beverly Thornton, and Rita Zecher.

From left, Marlene Haus, Marla Perlman
Photos by Susan Parker
High School Student Teaches Osher Class

A fall class in Italian conversation was an unusual back-to-school experience for some Osher members. Their study leader was the youngest instructor ever, Tommaso Giampapa, a senior at Taylor Allderdice High School in Pittsburgh.

How did this class come about? Osher members Joe and Rosemarie Shirk were students in an Italian language course taught by Anna Maria Berta, Tommaso’s mother, several years ago. Anna Maria assisted the Shirks by translating documents when they were applying for dual citizenship in Italy.

The Shirks urged her to teach at Osher again, but her busy work and family schedule made that impossible. Knowing how engaged the Osher students are, she thought that her son could be interested in leading a conversational class for them. He accepted with enthusiasm, and thus the class was born.

Tommaso, an honor student at Taylor Allderdice, is fluent in Italian, which is spoken at home. The conversations in class focused on current events in Italy and various everyday idioms used in the current Italian television and print media, often not taught in formal textbooks.

Asked to comment on his experience, Tomasso said, “Having been only a student all my life, I was curious to see a class from ‘the other side.’ I felt the responsibility of being prepared for each lesson and immediately realized that teaching is not easy. One needs to keep the class engaged not just by knowing the subject but also by using social skills and a variety of mediums, like videos and songs. Hopefully the students liked it! I had fun and would like to teach a follow-up class: their desire to learn was really inspiring!”

Conversing comfortably in a foreign language is not easy either. And in five class meetings in the Osher conference room in Hunt Library, Osher members learned something about speaking Italian, and a bright high school student learned something about teaching.

Rosalyn Treger

In the summer newsletter we asked for help in identifying the man in the photo above. He is Foster Jones.

Thanks to Paula Mathieson

Conductor/composer Flavio Chamis in his course “Three Perspectives on Music” on October 5, when the focus was on the music of Brazil, where he was born.

In class, from left: Carol Baker, Tommaso, Hazel Cope, Joan Fereday, Rosemarie Shirk
Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Carnegie Mellon

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