It’s Time to Register for Summer 2014!

By Lyn Decker, Manager/Registrar

By the time you have It’s All Talk in hand, you will have had the opportunity to sign into the online registration system that we have been preparing for this past year. If you have not signed on yet, you might want to do so now so that you are familiar with the system before Summer 2014 registration starts.

It is an easy process—like an online shopping experience. The new system will give the most up-to-date information about all of the classes in which you are enrolled, including changes in a date, class time, or classroom. This is also where you can access the “Open Class List,” “Course Calendar,” and our newly designed website—morning, noon, or night! You no longer have to wait for an email answer or for the office to open to get your answers!

Everyone will still receive a catalog! If you haven’t already received your Summer 2014 catalog, you can expect to receive it by the end of March. Online registration directions are in the back of the catalog for everyone’s convenience. If you don’t want to register online, you can still register by mail. The office will start to register the mailed-in registrations in the order received on the same date that registration is opened to all. The only difference will be that the staff doesn’t stay up all night to register the mail-ins.

Everyone with an email address will receive an email confirmation of all class admissions. For those without emails, a confirmation will be mailed.

Looking Back, Looking Ahead

By Sally Cohen

The time has come for me to change the role that I have assumed for Osher at CMU. It’s hard to believe that as of this past summer, I have been chair of the Curriculum Committee for 10 years! We’ve done a lot during that time that we should be proud of. For instance, when I took the position, 40 courses were considered very respectable. Now, we have close to 140! It’s exciting to realize the breadth and variety of our offerings.

To accomplish these achievements my dedicated committee of 23 people and I have followed a process developed for recruiting and

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From The President

By Jan Davis

It has been a pleasure and a privilege to serve you as president of the Osher Institute for Lifelong Learning at Carnegie Mellon these past two years. It has been a busy and productive two years. We have received the support of the Bernard Osher Foundation with a second million dollars for our endowment, enlarged our membership, and expanded our course offerings. We have purchased and implemented a new software system for registration online, created a new course catalog, hired three new staff members for our office, and offered an overseas travel opportunity to our members.

We continue to ask our members to give of their time and talents to help build a vibrant, exciting community of learners. You have all responded generously to our request for volunteers. Our organization is strong, creative, and successful because of our members.

I would like to extend a personal invitation to each of you to come and celebrate our successes at the annual meeting. We will be highlighting the events of the past year, introducing new members and thanking those who have given so much of their time. It is truly a wonderful opportunity to celebrate all of you.

We welcome all to our annual meeting. If you are a new member, plan to come! If you are a longtime member but have never attended the annual meeting, please come! If you have attended past annual meetings, please come again! Save the date: April 23, 12:00 noon-3:00 p.m. in the Rangos Auditorium, in the University Center. An invitation will be arriving in early April.

Delegates Plan Presentation for Osher Institutes National Convention

Osher at CMU will be sending two delegates to the Osher Lifelong Learning Institutes National Convention in Carlsbad, California. They will make a presentation on the use of data in decision making in our Osher Institute.

According to the abstract of the presentation, "Our host institution, Carnegie Mellon University, is particularly noted and praised for its use of data in making decision. Thriving in this data intensive environment has prompted our Osher to collect, analyze, and study ourselves in order to make a variety of decisions around curriculum, membership, and program offerings. . . . The panel will share some of the data we have collected and how we have used it to make successful choices. . . . Osher Institute at CMU was fortunate to be selected to benchmark with Rutgers in the fall, and we will share some of the insights we garnered from that visit as part of this presentation."

At the 2013 Holiday Luncheon on December 11: from left, Registrar/Manager Lyn Decker; Jayne Keffer, Luncheon Committee chair
Crabbiness, Control, And Compassion

By Gloriana St. Clair

Every day, the volunteers and staff in the Osher office deal with complaints, such as:
- I did not get into the class I wanted.
- Frew street parking costs too much.
- We should not have classes on Good Friday.

Often members raise their voices to those answering the telephone. Volunteers and staff refer these calls to our Registrar/Manager, Lyn Decker, who tries to resolve issues or refer the caller to a member of the Osher board. While each of us has many daily irritations, I believe we should strive to deal with them without crabbing at our neighbors and friends and without raising our voices.

When Lyn discussed this issue with the Executive Committee, the members agreed that our volunteers and staff should not have to endure abuse. If this were physical abuse, we would call campus police immediately. Verbal abuse is equally unacceptable.

Many have been in classes with individuals who were not controlling their contributions to the discussion. In classes, we often work together to help the study leader manage those individuals. Dr. Anna Estop, a member of our board, has given study leaders, volunteers, and staff some guidance on how to handle these classroom situations. Making the individuals complaining believe that they have been heard seems to be helpful.

Over the years, I have developed my own set of practices for controlling personal crabbiness. Here are three examples:
- When the steam is rolling out of my ears because of some ridiculous thing I have just heard, I silently count to ten before I speak.
- When I am so furious with what a group of people has done or said, I write it all down, print it out, and put it in my desk drawer.
- When I am still biting and spitting nails, I take out what I wrote and talk it over with someone wiser than I am.

My general attitude is that if I have had to raise my voice, I have lost.

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Entering the Land Of Friendly Creatures

The question “Which came first, the chicken or the egg?” is still under debate. In a book of poetry and illustrations, Ruth Drescher and Christine Michaels can tell you the answer. Osher member Christine, who writes poetry and is active in the city’s poetry circles, saw a couple of exhibits of Ruth’s drawings of colorful animals and thought to herself that she could write poems to accompany these creatures. Thus, In the Land of Friendly Creatures was born.

Ruth, an Osher member and artist, had observed her grandchildren using the Paint program on the computer. She tried it herself and digitally created the friendly, colorful animals. She has used these creatures on greeting cards and has exhibited her drawings. Chris has written poems for each of Ruth’s animals. This collaboration has resulted in the self-published book. In the Land of Friendly Creatures is not only enjoyable for children, it’s also a lot of fun for adults. For a glimpse into that land, go to http://www.drescherart.com.

Filomena Conti
CMU Study: Volunteering Can Be Healthy for Our Hearts

Without volunteers, our Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Carnegie Mellon would not exist. Started in the basement of CMU’s Alumni House with 40 members as the Academy for Lifelong Learning at CMU in 1992, our institute is now over 2,000 strong, with 140 courses offered in the current winter-spring semester.

We have an excellent staff of four in our Hunt Library office. But much of the organization’s management—from planning and budgeting to developing curriculum, recruiting study leaders, and assisting them, is done by volunteers. And our outstanding study leaders are volunteers as well.

So we know that volunteers have created and maintained a vital, stimulating resource in our lives. Now we’ve learned that volunteering can help our physical health as well. In July, a CMU press release reported that “new research from Carnegie Mellon University shows that older adults who volunteer for at least 200 hours per year decrease their risk of hypertension, or high blood pressure, by 40 percent.”

The study, conducted by Rodlescia S. Sneed, a Ph.D. candidate in psychology in the Dietrich College of Humanities and Social Sciences at CMU, and Sheldon Cohen, Robert E. Doherty Professor of Psychology, interviewed 1,164 adults aged 51-91 in both 2006 and 2010. At each interview, the researchers measured volunteerism, various social and psychological factors, and blood pressure. In 2006, all participants had normal blood pressure readings. In 2010, according to the press release, “...those who reported at least 200 hours of volunteer work during the initial interview were 40 percent less likely to develop hypertension than those who did not volunteer...” The study found that the amount continued on page 9

Osher volunteers in action: Member and study leader Harvey Meieran in conversation at study leaders’ training January 9. Among his volunteer roles, Harvey performs with the Pittsburgh Savoyards, and he shares his knowledge of Gilbert and Sullivan as a study leader of Osher courses. Right, board member and study leader Errol Miller at the Holiday Luncheon. His witty lyrics to familiar show tunes were part of the event’s entertainment that featured Connie Rapp’s “Singing for Fun” class. An attorney, Errol leads Osher courses about a number of legal issues. As the principal writer of the Allegheny County Bar Association’s annual topical satirical review, he wrote lyrics that made “Singing for Fun” especially fun to listen to.
Looking Back, Looking Ahead
Continued from page 1

retaining study leaders and helping them design the courses that fill our catalogs. In order to do that we have two three-hour meetings prior to each term—one discussing returning study leaders, and one discussing potential new study leaders. Committee members select or are assigned some of these people to contact and to follow up on the development of their proposals.

Early in our history, study leaders were recruited through personal relationships with members of the organization or with committee members. Over time, study leaders have come to suggest colleagues and acquaintances to teach, and especially exciting is the fact that people, many of them unknown to us, have written in or come into the office wanting to teach. Our growing reputation in the community has resulted in a large group of potential study leaders whom we can contact. I have wonderful memories of spending sometimes a half hour with a professor in his office talking about course topics that might attract Osher members.

Our curriculum’s evolution has ranged from a narrow group of academic courses to a variety of subjects spanning everything from biblical archaeology to tai chi and cooking. The enthusiasm of the members who take these courses is especially pleasing. Looking back, I remember the first time a non-academic topic (flower arranging) was proposed. There was much discussion among the committee members about whether that type of course would be appropriate for our program. Now, the catalog offers have broadened, and we see engineers taking drawing classes and physicists studying literature, and our program is growing and thriving.

Although I’m retiring as committee chair, I am not leaving the scene. Byron Gottfried will become committee chair, and I will become his co-chair. The development of the program has become quite complicated, and the office staff has become involved in such things as keeping records, which has been tremendously helpful. I will still have contact with study leaders and committee participants and be part of the decision-making process. I will consult on issues that come up, since I worked on the development of many of them and have a sense of what works and what does not. Again, it’s difficult to imagine that I developed most of the curriculum procedures—with the help of the committee and others, of course!

Byron and I have worked closely together over the past few years, and we look forward to this working companionship continuing. He is pleased to have me as a consultant and to also have me work with committee members, mentoring procedures that have made the curriculum process work so well. I intend to continue contacting study leaders—especially those who have not yet taught for us—and working with committee members as they interact with their study leader contacts.

So, I will say good-bye to the committee chairmanship and welcome assisting the organization whenever that is necessary. I also look forward to staying in touch with those whom I have worked with all these years and getting to know the new staff members who have come on board.

I thank everyone who has been a part of this chapter of my life. I’ve enjoyed it tremendously and look forward to the future as it unfolds.

Creatures from the imaginations of Osher members Chris Michaels and Ruth Drescher. Chris’s poems were inspired by Ruth’s drawings, resulting in the book The Land of Friendly Creatures, described on page 3.
Unlocking the Classics with Jim Cunningham is always well attended by Osher members. This past fall was no exception. With film and Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra members, Mr. Cunningham, WQED’s classical music radio host (below, at podium) takes attendees into the musical experiences of PSO performers and their thoughts about various pieces, orchestras, and conductors. They came in singles and pairs, and what fun the conversations were between Lorna McGhee, principal flute from Scotland, and Jennifer Ross, principal second violin, who played several wonderful duets and discussed their orchestral and music school experiences. Their thoughts and those of the other performers were sometimes stimulated by videos of the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra with Leonard Bernstein conducting.

Adedeji Ogunfolu (pictured below) a young horn player who is in the Orchestra Training Program for African American Musicians, talked about how he came to the French horn and how “whenever a horn player makes a mistake, everybody knows it,” which elicited chuckles from us all. He is studying under principal horn, William Caballero, who “never errs.” Adedeji regrets that he is here only for one year, but will get some experience playing and talking about his musical education in some of the Symphony’s outreach programs.

Paul Silver (pictured below), who has played the viola with the Symphony since 1981, feels that he adds the “rich, chocolate tones underneath the music generated by everyone else in the Orchestra.” We asked him several questions about music for the viola, his instrument, and about bowing techniques.

Other PSO members who spoke with us included Jennifer Orchard, Marylene Gingras-Roy, Misha Istomin, and Eva Burmeister.

We thank Jim for these wonderful sessions and hope he continues them, since he has only whet our appetites for more. He was ably assisted by Gloria Mou, who involved these musicians in this PSO outreach activity.

By Susan Parker
OUR OSHER CLASSROOMS

How to Cook a Pilgrim Feast

Taking a cooking class with Dave Green is a rich experience. You get great easy-to-follow recipes and a dose of history and culture to further enrich the course.

In his winter-spring class in New England cookery, Dave began at the beginning with Native American berry soup, showing what foods were available before the arrival of the colonists. You had your choice of fire-roasted bison meat, wild onions, wild blackberries or blueberries, honey, salt, and water.

He then updated it to our present pantries, then demonstrated and shared tastings. Corn dumplings transmogrified from the original cornmeal, ash, salt, and water to a current-day inclusion of frozen corn, baking powder, bacon drippings, and milk. Then on to current-day fish chowder, maple Indian pudding, and berry cobbler.

Dave is not averse to shortcuts and substitutes, and though Culinary Institute trained, is strong on comfort foods.

Going beyond the colonists’ cookery, Dave delved into the Shakers, a religious sect founded by Mother Ann Lee in the early 18th century, whose motto was “Hands to work, hearts to God.” Though celibate, their remnants exist today, preparing tasty but simple food. Only lemons, sugar, eggs in a pie crust produce a delicious lemon pie.

Multi-talented Dave is a trained singer who has worked in musical theatre and cabaret and has produced delectable sweets in his Sweetie Sweetie bakery in Regent Square and light foods in the former Café dez Artz.

Dave, closest to the camera in the photo, above, is about to launch a blog at www.courageousculinarian.com, which will deal with international spice blends in practical small packets.

His next venture for Osher will deal with southern hospitality.

By Joan Morse Gordon
Crabbiness, Control, And Compassion

Continued from page 3

Many make annual New Year’s resolutions to be better people. In faith traditions from atheism to Zen, compassion is the hallmark of a more self-actualized and better human being. This year, I have been discussing compassion in two of my book groups using Karen Armstrong’s 12 Steps to a Compassionate Life as a guide. In the 2014 second summer session, I will be offering a class on this topic.

My mother taught that honey was superior to vinegar for catching flies and bees. Although I have had little need to catch flies and bees, I have used her advice to guide interpersonal relationships. The essence of compassion is to treat others as we wish to be treated, and I prefer to be treated with respect and affection rather than crabbiness.

Osher Study Leaders Featured on “Life Reimagined” Today Show Segment

In the Fall 2013 issue, It’s All Talk, wrote that Karen Bush, Louise Machinist, and Jean McQuillan—study leaders for the Osher at CMU course “Shared Living Models: Intentional Community Comes to the ’Burgh” —had been interviewed by TV’s Jane Pauley. We alerted readers to look for them on the November 26 Today Show. You can read about the Osher class, the study leaders, and the TV show on the CMU website http://www.cmu.edu/homepage/health/2013/fall/golden-opportunity.shtml.

To watch the Today show segment from a link on our Osher website, go to http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_aJfWcSLYae

On October 11, 2013, a TV crew filmed the Osher class on shared living. However, film of the class was not included in the November 26 Today Show segment on “Life Reimagined.”

Multi-Day Trips

Alexandria, Virginia
April 25-27, 2014

Five historic sites, including Woodlawn Plantation (shown below) and the Pope-Leighey House.

Pope-Leighey House, designed by Frank Lloyd Wright

Art Lovers Trip

June 17-19, 2014

Dayton Art Museum, Cincinnati Art Museum, and Columbus Museum of Art

Above, Cincinnati Art Museum; Right, Dayton Art Institute

For more information on multi-day tours, contact RoseMarie’s Tours 412-821-0210
Volunteering for a Healthy Heart
Continued from page 4

of time spent volunteering, and not the type of activity, was the only factor associated with increased protection from hypertension. The press release quotes Ms. Sneed, the lead author of the study: “Participating in volunteer activities may provide older adults with social connections that they might not have otherwise. There is strong evidence that having good social connections promotes healthy aging and reduces risk for a number of negative health outcomes.”

So when we Osher members volunteer to teach a course, act as study leader assistants, staff the reception desk, write for the newsletter, help with mailings, or plan a day trip or lecture, we’re not only helping our very special lifelong learning program—we’re helping to keep ourselves healthy as well.

Rosalyn Treger

Don’t Miss the Osher Weekly Essentials

The Osher Weekly Essentials is a hit. This is our new Friday email publication that reports all of our current and upcoming events that are typically not class specific. Instead of our sending everyone separate email announcements throughout the week, the Weekly Essentials puts all of the week’s information in one place for your convenience. The information is also kept updated on our website.

Lyn Decker, Registrar/Manager

Osher Lifelong Institute at Carnegie Mellon
Annual Meeting
April 23, 2013
12 Noon
University Center
Rangos Auditorium

Members will elect officers and members of the Board of Directors. The following slate has been nominated:

OFFICERS—One-year terms
President Joe Shirk
Vice-President Jayne Keffer
Secretary Gloriana St. Clair
Treasurer Carl Hohnbaum

BOARD MEMBERS—Three-year terms
Gary Bates
John Olmsted
Ruth Reidbord

Alan Stanford, leading theatre expert on Wilde and Shakespeare and artistic producing director at the Pittsburgh Irish and Classical Theatre, will perform at our Annual Meeting.

In a lively, animated evening lecture on October 16, 2012, Alan Stanford, who will entertain at our 2014 Annual Meeting, talked about his life as an actor in film, TV, and the theater.
Evening Lectures

Feb. 27—Rabbi Alvin Berkun Discussed Catholic-Jewish Relations

In June 2013, Rabbi Alvin Berkun, rabbi emeritus at the Tree of Life Congregation in Pittsburgh, had an audience with Pope Francis, along with the International Jewish Committee for Interreligious Consultations. In an evening lecture on February 27, Rabbi Berkun discussed the evolution of Catholic-Jewish dialogue.

March 4—Lecture-Discussion of Contemporary Ballet Ketubah

Ketubah is a contemporary ballet by Julia Adams. The program featured a discussion and lecture led by the Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre Artistic Director Terrence S. Orr, Choreographer Julia Adams, other company artists, and community experts. They discussed the Jewish cultural traditions that are present in the ballet and showed video excerpts from Ketubah.

April 8, 2014—Dr. Mark S. Kamlet, CMU Provost and Executive Vice President, Speaks on “Technology and Education: At Carnegie Mellon and Beyond.”

Dr. Mark S Kamlet is one of the foremost thinkers on the future of education. He believes that the impact of technology on education is and will continue to be profound. His talk focuses on “what is past, or passing, or to come” and the significant impact of technology in education.

May 13—Greg Nace, President of the Pittsburgh Botanic Garden, Speaks on the Development of the City’s Newest Cultural Asset, a 460-Acre Outdoor Botanic Garden.

In a memorable day trip, members celebrated the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Lake Erie aboard the Appledore IV on September 8, 2013.
Thank You for Successful Carnegie Mellon Food Drive

We extend our thanks and appreciation to all those Osher members who so generously contributed to the Carnegie Mellon University Twentieth Annual Food Drive in November 2013.

As a result, 8,284 pounds of non-perishable food items and toiletries were contributed to the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank. In addition, a total of $7,558.90 in cash was also collected. Both of these totals exceed last year’s collection.

Hopefully, again with the help of our loyal Osher members, the University can surpass 2013’s totals in the November 2014 Food Drive.

Joe Scorpion

Tuesday, April 8 Consol Energy Center Tour and Lunch

The Luncheon Committee has planned a tour of the Consol Energy Center for April 8 at 10:30 a.m. Learn about its green building features that made it the first NHL arena to become LEED Gold certified, visit locker rooms, and enjoy lunch at nearby TGIF Friday’s.

Holiday Party December 12, 2013 Pittsburgh Athletic Association

At the Holiday Luncheon: top, President Jan Davis with microphone; Luncheon Committee Chair Jayne Keffer at the Christmas tree. Above left, Connie Rapp’s “Singing for Fun” group entertains with “Over the Rainbow”; right, from left: Osher staffers Chelsea Prestia and Chris Dashti.
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A Visit to Our Website

When you go to our website—
http://www.cmu.edu/osher/ to sign in for Summer 2014 registration, see the many other features there. Read notices about upcoming special events; see photos and watch videos of past pleasures; see a campus map; find timely information about everything from parking to making a donation to Osher.