I have spent my working life “employed” by non-profit organizations. Throughout that time I have also been involved in volunteer organizations. One of the things I have observed is that volunteer organizations, especially those located on the UCSD campuses, struggle to fill leadership positions and prepare people for more demanding roles. As a result, they often have to reinvent the wheel.

Our Osher Institute at UC San Diego is a jewel. It has the resources available to create the most incredible program imaginable. We are entirely a volunteer leadership organization. We need to develop a way to have a solid committee structure and to prepare people to lead these committees. That should not be difficult. We have an experienced membership that is eager to help us and contribute their expertise and energy to these committees.

These are the committees we believe will best serve our needs:

- **Public Relations and Publications Committee:** We are in the process of designing and publishing our newsletter and other pieces of literature. This committee produces content for our university and local audiences. PR people are needed to design a PR program that will show our achievements to the public and to the UC San Diego. Will our experienced PR and media people please step forward?

- **Finance Committee:** Experienced budget and financial development people are needed to oversee our funds.

- **Membership Committee:** This is our most enthusiastic and efficient body. It welcomes new and prospective members with a variety of events. But it needs help keeping members happy after they join. Events like our Potluck Lunch, New Members Luncheon, and Holiday Parties are examples of activities that could be multiplied.

- **Technology Committee:** A handful of our members have kept our AV equipment and jumped in to troubleshoot when needed. We are proposing new initiatives that will increase our need for experienced people. A few experienced AV technicians are needed to oversee our technology.

- **Activities Committee:** This committee organizes walks to museums and other events of interest. It also organizes the walking tours that are part of our San Diego Neighborhoods series.

- **Campus Connection Committee:** This committee creates a welcoming environment on campus. We are in the process of redesigning and updating our website. We hope to make our website a place where our members can go to find out about the amazing wealth of programs and events on campus.

I expect many of our members have the skills to work on one of these committees. Please contact me with recommendations and willingness to join.

PRESIDENT’S COLUMN
By Walt Thulin

The first of three UCSD Osher groups visiting Cuba for seven days with Cuba Educational Travel returned on October 30, the second left November 5, and a third will leave in March. Most of the time was spent in Havana, but the group also went by bus to Cienfuegos and Trinidad, which allowed views of both urban and rural life.

While the group sampled many aspects of contemporary Cuban life, food, art, music, dance, architecture, and tobacco growing, for your reporter perhaps the most rewarding part of the trip was the opportunity to see how this distinctive society functions.

Cuba is probably second only to North Korea in the control the government exercises over its people. While things are beginning to change, almost all property (with the important exception of housing) is still owned by the state, and almost all workers are state employees (paid around $20.00 (US) monthly whether you are a doctor, a teacher, or a street-sweeper). Cuba’s past sugar wealth is reflected in the many palatial administrative and residential buildings one sees in the central cities, but Revolutionary ideology and the American embargo have left Cuba a third world country, its physical plant unmaintained, its people impoverished, its resources underutilized, and (because people must find ways around state rules to survive) its society corrupt.

Nonetheless, visiting Cuba was a lot of fun. The group stayed in excellent hotels, ate very well (in some recently privatized restaurants), and traveled in comfort (in Chinese-made buses). We were treated to well-given lectures on Cuban history, politics, economics, and Cuban-American relations and visited art galleries and museums, two terrific dance groups (one ballet and the other salsa), public squares and monuments, Ernest Hemingway’s home, and the US Interests Section (which serves as an informal US embassy). Walking around, we visited government stores (which, among other functions, dispense rationed food), peeked into residential doorways (urban residences are right on street), and watched school teachers exercise their classes on street medians.

There is still room in the March group. To get details or sign up, contact Collin Laverty, Cuban Educational Travel, Collin@cubaeducationaltravel.com.

Advice to travelers: (1) Cuba is warm and moist, so bring light clothing; (2) Cuban musical performances begin around 10:00 PM, so try to nap; and (3) Cuban helpings are large, so be prepared to put on some weight.
WITH SONGS IN HER HEART

One of Osher’s most active and delightful members, Fran Zimmerman (married to Harry Zimmerman, she calls them “the Zimmies”), Fran is an amazing combination of interests and energy. Professionally, she began as a teacher, teaching in the US and later, traveling with Harry for his job, teaching abroad in Asia and Israel where she taught at the Weizmann Institute of Science. Upon their return to the states, she became a curriculum writer after getting an MA in Linguistics, eventually becoming Curriculum Branch Head at the Naval Training Center in San Diego responsible for the curriculum of 140 training courses.

She is also a published author. Her book English For Science has been translated into Japanese, and is currently selling in Japan. In addition to her successes in education, Fran has always maintained a major interest in music and dance. Her father was a professional musician (Fran says, mostly unemployed, which is why she became a teacher). She takes classes in tap dance, folk dancing, (everything from Argentine Tango to Greek Syrtos and Israeli dancing). She has taught classes in Operetta at Osher, and was a performer and choreographer for the latest Osher show.

A STAR RISING IN TWO WORLDS

A tenured full professor in the UCSD Economics department who does gigs playing an acoustic guitar and singing country music--meet the delightful WILL RAMEY (Professor Garey Willard Ramey), who performed for Osher at our Oct. 4th Friday musical event.

Will grew up in Bakersfield, CA, in a farming community, and graduated from Arizona State University, where he met his wife (also a fully tenured economics professor) and they both got their Ph.D.s at Stanford. Farming, teaching and music are all in his background. He has been touring, playing and composing all kinds of music since the 70’s, but recently his country music singing career has really taken off, with numerous engagements, a CD and another on the way.

Will loves to write poetry, and has always played all kinds of music, but says he loves country music especially because it tells stories, portrays characters, and deals with strong emotions. It is so direct --it feels as if the person singing is someone you already know.

True to his nature as an economist, Will has his lists of “rules” that country music has to follow--it must be sung with a southern accent (Northern vowels wouldn’t sound right at all!!), it must sound like speech, a song can’t be longer than 3 and 1/2 minutes, the chorus must come in within the first 2 minutes, and the “hook” must be repeated at least 5 times!

Will likes the combination of art and the commercial aspects of being a country music performer--combining the business aspects of the art work, packaging, distribution, creating a real business web site (www.willramey.com). His work is available on CD, on iTunes, and at Amazon.
AGONY OF INDECISION: RESOLVED

By Faye Girsh

It was about six months ago that I talked for a couple of hours to a room full of Osherites who seemed to be in the same boat about moving to a Retirement Community.

The deed is now done -- I moved to the Vi -- but let me tell you the pros and cons that went into the decision -- and how it turned out.

First ambivalence: I am too young, healthy, interested in the world, too independent to be in a community which seems to be composed of much older people, many with disabilities. They are telling me this is the Final Chapter. YIKES!

Yes, but I am not really that young (80), things will not get better health-wise, most of these “old” people are quite interesting and vigorous. If I wait longer I might become ineligible. I did consider more interesting alternatives, like the Best Exotic Marigold Hotel or waiting for the invitation to live in that apartment on the Left Bank. My conclusion was that I can do a month in these exotic places and that I can find more people who share my interests “inside” and also treasure like-minded friends outside. Though I still cherish my Poetry group, Book Club, Brunch Bunch, Playreading Group and friends who enjoy ethnic food and the theatre.

#2: Living in my condo in La Jolla village is a wonderful experience. I can walk to the Athenaeum, the Museum, two independent book stores, a great library, restaurants, shopping, and to the ocean with pelicans flying overhead. How could I leave? Yes, but traffic in and out of La Jolla can be horrendous. My knees are too bad to actually walk easily to these places. And -- now that I’ve moved I hardly look back. No, the neighborhood around UTC is not charming, not a beach city, full of wide boulevards and skyscrapers and shopping centers -- but it has a lot to offer, including 3 movie theatres and closeness to UCSD and to Osher.

#3: Money. If I delay this move I will have enough money to continue my stimulating, mind-expanding travels. I will also have less to leave my children. Knowing that, at the end of 2012 I did take a trip to Saudi Arabia then another one to Burma. But ultimately I decided that the trade-off for moving into a retirement community is worth the price for peace of mind, companionship, good nutrition, interesting activities, and a secure environment. I hope to still manage one interesting trip a year and start going through my albums. Anyway it’s slightly unrealistic to continue to travel the way I did even 5 years ago.

My kids might get less money but do not have to worry about caring for me. Though they had nothing to do with the decision they’ve both been here and, I think, are relieved. My daughter’s in Australia and my son in Dallas; I do miss them but glad they’re off the hook for my care. They are not Helicopter Children and never tell me what to do. Benign neglect but OK.

#4 Regimentation and decisions. I was worried about having to eat meals at a certain time (and pretty early), open my apartment for cleaning, only use certain providers for repairs, and make reservations for dinner.

Many of these concerns have come to pass; I am still working on how to handle what I find inconvenient, if not annoying. I understand the trade-off in having my life an open book in exchange for concern about my well-being. I have taken the 31 meal plan which is quite reasonable (about $6 for an amazing meal) but find it annoying to reserve by 2:30 the same day
and, then, to have to assemble people you’d like to eat with. It is a pretty formal and cumbersome process. I have suggested that Community Tables where you can walk in and join 6-8 people at a table might be another option. (This is the case at White Sands.) It is what happens on Monday when we have a buffet (at 5PM) then a movie and sit where we want. Also at breakfast, which is fun and informal. At dinner, with all its possible courses, can take up to an hour and a half. This can be speeded up if there is an event that night which is more what I’m used to, i.e., dinner is not the main event usually, but a social preliminary to something like a play, lecture or movie. Often, though, these dinners are fun -- and the food is always good.

5. Picking a place. How to decide? I picked the Vi after deciding that a CCRC (Continuing Care Residential Community) was reassuring to me since my kids do not live close by.

I wanted to know there would be assisted living, skilled nursing, memory care available (though I would be horrified, I think, to live in these facilities for more than 3 years but that’s just my feeling now.) I would not want to move out if I needed help. And, anticipating knee surgery, would want to be in the same facility (and I can report on that later, having done it.) There are two other CCRC’s but they are too far away from UCSD. White Sands is a different sort of CCRC but their Skilled Nursing is not Medicare certified. Many people prefer the flexibility of a rental (like at Casa de Manana, Wesley Palms, and most others.) I want a place that’s lively, has stimulating activities, lots of Democrats, people who are still attached to the outside world, and arranges trips to plays, opera, etc. Vi seemed to fit the bill better than any other, but that’s just me. Others are happy in places that meet their requirements.

6. I liked my condo. It had a big garden on my patio and I could walk to the ocean and the other activities I enjoyed. The apartments I saw at the Vi were OK but not exciting.

Now, I’m in and find my new place inviting, airy, comfortable, spacious, quiet, with a great view. I’m not looking back, although I did rent my place out (just in case.) So, I moved in July 29, had surgery August 29, and am now in the Care Center recuperating. But that’s another story I’ll tell you about sometime. Meanwhile, the agony of indecision was resolved by making the decision, and I’m good with it.

PS It's been four months since I moved to the Vi. I like it. Like having the choice of doing things on the outside or settling in with friends here, like the people I've met (though it is not as concentrated intellectually as Osher), like the varied, well prepared and plentiful food, like someone cleaning my place weekly, like using the gym any time, like the activities (again it's not at the level of Osher), like my airy, sunny apartment, like the wait, valet and administrative staff, like being able to walk to the little shopping center, and like the security of the care program. Works for me!

ARTICLES: The Osher Observer would like members to submit short articles or comments that they would like to share with the membership. Send them to:
marthakaplan@earthlink.net

NEW MEMBER
ILDIKO THOTH
Broadway Memories: A Musical Review
Registration for our two Master Classes begins on December 18, in order to give all an equal opportunity to attend. Professor Brian Keating, who mesmerized us with a distinguished lecture a few quarters ago, will present a five-part Master Class entitled “Modern Cosmology.” Keating showed us he had the ability to make a very complex subject understandable to even the least science oriented among us, all the while making sure the scientists among us were challenged as well. He succeeded in giving us a glimpse into the distant past (billions of years ago) with humor and grace. Our second master class will bring us up to date on “Mexico Beyond NAFTA,” with five lectures about our neighbor to the south today in the fields of economics, politics, international relations and more. This quarter Amy Patterson, our efficient Program Manager, has kept statistics on our Master Class attendance. What she found was that nobody who came and waited for extra seats was turned away. Often we even had empty chairs when all were accommodated.

Hopefully, our “free” master class presented by the faculty of CARTA this quarter will encourage everyone to try our other series which we are privileged to host. In the winter we will have a stupendous line up of faculty members affiliated with Calit2. Each professor will fill us in on his or her “cutting-edge” technology related research. You won’t want to miss any of the lectures on such topics as MOOCs, Quantitative Health, Augmented Reality, and more. (If you don’t know what these subjects are, well, all the more reason to get up and drive to UCSD and join us!)

All of our series – Social Sciences, Science and Medicine, International Relations, Humanities, and Law and Society will present a wide range of interesting topics to stimulate your gray matter and improve your cognitive powers. Come and meet our accomplished member-presenters who will be delivering lectures on such diverse topics as Presidential history, opera, education, and music in the Osher Presenter series. Want to participate more in your own extended learning? Join our numerous discussion classes held in room 128 – a few are: Modern and Contemporary Authors, Inquiring Minds, Major Historical Trends, and Deliberative Dialogue.

Our winter Distinguished Lecture series promises to be truly distinguished, as will be a five-part series on the Civil Rights Movement, hosted by Dan Dinan and Bob LaPorta, and a small five part discussion with the actors, directors, and playwrights among other movers and shakers from the La Jolla Playhouse.

If you didn’t pay attention to our excellent series on Healthy Aging this fall, I will give you the most important bit of information: If you want to maintain your cognitive skills, in addition to exercising your body, you need to challenge your mind by trying and learning new things. So do yourself a favor, make a New Year’s resolution to try at least one lecture you wouldn’t have tried in the past. I guarantee you will learn something you never thought you could learn, and your brain will thank you for it.

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**MARSHA’S LOOK AHEAD**

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**OSHER CALENDAR**

- **Dec. 18**: Master Class Registration
- **Jan. 6, 2014**: Winter Quarter Begins
- **Jan. 17**: Council Meeting*
- **Feb. 28**: Council Meeting* (Potluck before)
- **Mar. 14**: Winter Quarter Ends
- **Apr. 7**: Spring Quarter Begins
- **Apr. 28**: Council/Membership Meeting*
- **Apr. 30**: 40th Anniversary
- **May 16**: Council Meeting*
- **June 13**: Spring Quarter Ends

* everyone invited

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**Vol. 6 No. 2 Winter 2014**

The *Osher Observer* is published quarterly by the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at UC San Diego.

**Editor**: Martha Kaplan

**Copy Editor**: Kim Davies, Steve Clarey

**Layout**: Jim Wyrtzen

**Program Manager**: Amy Patterson

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ON LOSSES AND GAINS

BY Martha Kaplan, editor

There is an article in the New York Times this morning (Nov. 12, 2013) on being old, disabled, and hating to accept help. Aging is a bear, no doubt about it—"not for sissies," as the saying goes. I heard a famous author once, I forget which one, saying in response to aging being described as a battle—"battle, hell—it’s a massacre!".

It does seem as if we at Osher have experienced an unusually large number of losses this past year: Many deaths, many illnesses and disabilities. Every discussion seems to end this way: “What do you expect at this age? When you are old, you have to expect lots of losses.”

This is surely true—from littler losses, like not being able to play tennis anymore, to bigger ones, like my beloved husband, my hearing, my knees! Getting older has meant in large part coping with and adjusting to losses. It is so tempting to retreat, give in, live a limited life.

But it always occurs to me that Osher is a way of increasing life, of additions to life, in the face of losses and diminishments. Additions of knowledge, additions of meeting and making new friends, additions to social activities. More music, more art—more of life! Being an active member of Osher is a way, to me, of making gains and staying more alive during this time of life when there are so many losses.

Martha

UC San Diego
Osher Lifelong Learning Institute
Celebrating 40 Years of Excellence
April 30, 2014

We want to thank Marsha Korobkin for the marvelous program she has overseen with diligence and dedication for the past two years. Marsha wants to retire from that role, while remaining on the Curriculum Committee. The dedication that she has brought to this task and the incredible hours she has given to us are huge. We will miss her leadership in the role. Steve Clarey will assume the duties as the Chair in addition to his duties as Vice President for Planning on the Executive Committee.

IT’S BACK AGAIN

“YOU’RE A GOOD MAN, CHARLIE BROWN”

Wednesday, JANUARY 29 AT 1 PM

You’re a Good Man Charlie Brown is the delightful and heartwarming musical comedy that has been produced more than any other musical in Broadway history.

It’s coming back to the Osher stage, so if you missed it the first time, or if you just want to see it once more, mark your calendars for Wednesday, January 29. Come see the cast of your Osher friends regress to the age of eight years old in the revival of this beloved musical comedy.

The cast includes Reed Sullivan, Jim Wyrtzen, Marcia Wyrtzen, Katrin Belenky Peck, Josie Burdick, Al Korobkin, Ethel Zablow, and Linda Shirer.

Music Director: Jay Berman
Director: Linda Shirer