It was a busy winter at Osher. Often it was standing room only for the exciting and interesting courses we had to offer. Two Master Classes were well received; one on the interdisciplinary institute unique to UCSD, Cal Eye Tee Too; and one facilitated by Glenn Smith about the U.S. Constitution. Mark Evans, as always brought in outstanding speakers for the Law and Society series and Jack Holtzman did the same for various lectures on science. All of the coordinators take their roles very seriously, so be sure to thank them for their hard work.

Our visitors from colder climes who came to winter here in paradise added to the program: Allan Kleinman discussing genetics and personalized medicine; Eileen Mitchell who valiantly pinch hit with Marcia Wyrtzen for a class on Fun With Theater Arts; Jean Hankin who helped moderate Current Events; and Flossie Riesner who provided new insights into problem solving with algebra.

It would take more space than allowed to mention all the people who helped make our learning experiences provocative and interesting. We are grateful to all the people from our ranks who consistently facilitate classes, such as John Staude, Phyllis Rosenbaum, Dan Dinan, Barbara Greer and Aurora and Bob King, among others. Thank you, too, to president of Osher Reed Sullivan for conscientiously inviting wonderful musicians for our listening pleasure on Friday afternoons.

On a personal note, we apologize for the delay in getting this issue of the Osher Observer to you. As we all know life is what gets in the way when you are making plans. That is exactly what happened to us. First it was major surgery for my husband Marv, who is now recovering very well and is grateful for all your good thoughts and wishes; and then it was computer problems. All that aside, we are excited about the Spring Quarter which is upon us, chock full of interesting choices for learning and expanding our knowledge.

Enjoy!
Joan Kleinman

Of the numerous snowbirds that fly to San Diego from cooler climes, some land at the doorstep of the UCSD Osher Institute (OLLI). Among those who swell the ranks during the winter quarter is a small group who are also students at the Brandeis Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (BOLLI) located in Waltham, MA.

At UCSD, the BOLLI contingent finds the same vitality, friendliness, and love of learning that exists in their home community. What they find different is organizational logistics.

At BOLLI, there are two 10-week semesters and each course meets weekly on either Tuesday or Wednesday. However, there are 4 periods each day, starting bright and early at 8:30 am and at each period there are 4 or 5 offerings spanning topics including music, writing, literature, history, mythology, science and more. Classes meet for 1 hour and 25 minutes – with no break! At mid-day, a “Lunch and Learn” hour features an outside speaker on an eclectic variety of subjects.

All classes are peer-led and seminar-like with about 15 to 24 enrollees. A student registers for one to three particular courses and makes a fairly strong commitment to attend all sessions and do reading assignments and other preparation outlined in the syllabus. Traditionally, students make brief presentations augmenting material the study group leader presents.

Do East Coast scholars eat more than West Coast scholars? Food is critical at BOLLI. BOLLI’s founders envisioned their program not only as a place of learning but also as an opportunity to socialize and make friends. Since Massachusetts weather doesn’t encourage al fresco dining, a large room called the Gathering Place serves as the equivalent of UCSD’s outdoor patio. Folks congregate at the Gathering Place between classes as well as for lunch. All day, four large urns of coffee and hot water are available - and consumed - complemented by snacks brought in by members on a rotating basis. Coffee in class – definitely!

Supplemental activities enhance the schedule– excursions to local places of interest, a New Yorker discussion group, winter “intensives” taught by Brandeis professors, a dinner-theater group and a dramatics group, Sceneiors. BOLLI also publishes a biennial Journal of members’ writing and photography.
When you sit in her office overlooking the Pacific Ocean and speak with Nigella Hillgarth, Executive Director of the Birch Aquarium, you realize she is exactly where she belongs. Upon joining the Aquarium in 2002, Nigella spearheaded the creation of the dynamic Scripps Explorers Gallery, which transformed a decade-old exhibition in the Hall of Oceanography. She also expanded visitors’ hands-on interaction by installing two additional touch tide pools. One- to three-year exhibits developed and installed under her direction include Sounds of the Sea, Earthquake: Life on a Restless Planet, Sea of Genes, Art of Deception, Wonders of Water, and the award-winning Feeling the Heat: The Climate Challenge.

Nigella Hillgarth has brought great distinction to the Aquarium and to her position. Visitors have exceeded 400,000 per year at a time when most other U.S. aquariums were experiencing losses. Her success in quadrupling gifts from private funds is extremely beneficial to a self-supporting aquarium that receives no direct support from federal, state, or city funding. She enjoys personal and professional recognition from the Scripps Institution of Oceanography (SIO) as a department head and the first person from the Aquarium who reports directly to the Director of SIO. Nigella has always been committed to translating research and applying what was learned in laboratories to the real world. She currently serves as assistant director for SIO, working to ensure that the institution's mission and cutting-edge discoveries are effectively communicated to the world.

Even as a child, Nigella will tell you she was always interested in animals and their behavior. Born in Tipperary, Ireland, she attended boarding school in England. As a young adult she had various jobs in nature reserves in the UK and Spain. While working at the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust in England she was invited to apply to Oxford University where she spent 11 years doing research and earning a doctorate in Zoology. Her area of specialization was birds, particularly evolutionary ornithology. In the 1980’s she did cutting edge work with some of the most prestigious scientists in the world examining disease and hereditary existence of pheasants.

She was invited to set up a similar laboratory at UC Riverside using jungle fowl as specimens. After a year she left for the University of Seattle to explore the interface between disease and behavior. This subsequently led Nigella to the University of Utah where she had an appointment as a research professor in the Biology Department.

However, after many years in laboratories, Nigella still yearned to be in the outdoors. She also

(Continued on page 4)
noticed a disconnect between science and public information, finding it difficult to apply what was learned in laboratories to the real world. As she was contemplating leaving the ivory tower and the safety of the university a fortuitous position became available to her. The Tracy Aviary Facility in Salt Lake City was struggling to maintain itself. She was appointed as Curator, then moved on to become Executive Director. It was in this latter position that she acquired new skills not related to research, namely fund-raising and managing to help a struggling non-profit organization become viable. She is proud to say that Tracy Aviary is thriving today. Four years later she was recruited for the position she now holds at the Birch Aquarium.

Nigella contributes much of her success as Executive Director of the Birch Aquarium to the phenomenal staff with whom she works. The quality and breadth of the exhibits created during her tenure have served to gain her and the staff the recognition to be taken seriously by the university. The Jeffrey B. Graham Lectures, held the second Monday of every month and shown on UCSD-TV provide a broad link between the facility and the public. The lectures are open to the public for a small fee and free to members.

Nigella believes a functioning ocean is a key to our survival. It affects our weather, our health and our ability to live on this planet. Looking ahead, Nigella and her staff plan to build on the existing foundation to have closer associations with the university and more communal outreach.

Yes, Nigella, it is indeed a long way to Tipperary from your perch above the Pacific and we are glad you are here with us!

Reed Sullivan, President, Osher Council

On March 2 the Osher Council held an open meeting at the University City Center. Several members opted to attend the meeting and were pleased with the ability to park easily and for free; the spaciousness of the rooms with comfortable chairs, and permission to bring snacks with them to munch as they contemplated the issues at hand.

While the University City Center rooms are additional spaces leased by Extension there are no current plans to move Osher classes to this new location except on a case by case basis. Such a move may occur when there is unanimous agreement by participants of some smaller classes, such as peer led series that currently take place in room 128. This action may make it possible to free up Room 128 for more popular classes that need flow-over from Room 129.

So--------Osher classes will continue just as they are now planned for the foreseeable future.

It is with profound regret that we inform you of the passing of our member Jack Samuels in Chicago in January. Jack was the Founder and President of the Truth in Labeling Campaign, dedicated to exposing the toxic effects of MSG and where it is hidden in food, pharmaceuticals and dietary supplements. Funeral services were held in Chicago. He and his wife Adrienne were the parents of four children and grandparents of eleven.
According to the by-laws of the Osher Life-Long Learning Institute, we are mandated to hold an election for five new Council members every year. Elected Council members serve for a term of three years, with a total of fifteen Council members serving at any one time. Only annual Osher members are eligible to be nominated for election to the Council and are able to vote at the Council election. We have always been fortunate to have a wonderful corps of people coming forward to serve on the Council.

This year there were six candidates for the five Council positions for the 2012-2015 term. One current Council member Katie Keller recently chose to step down and not complete the remaining two years of her term. Thus the Executive Council invited Judy Russell, currently on the Council and one of this year's six candidates, to fill Katie's term. With only five candidates remaining for the five Council positions, there is no need for any election. **Thus, the election, originally scheduled for April 13, 2012, has been cancelled.**

We welcome the talented and new members to the Council. Here is what they have to say about our organization and program.

**Kimberly Davies:** I think Osher is a great gift to our community. It certainly has been a gift to me in my time of transition. I want to volunteer my energy and talents in any way I can to continuing the outstanding programs we have. I would be very privileged to serve on the council of Osher.

**Grace Lee:** In retirement, I have arrived at a wonderful balance of purpose with family (part-time babysitting my 3-year old granddaughter), travel (frequently visiting one son who works in Hong Kong and a daughter/grandsons who live in Seoul), and enrichment (attending Osher classes). Having enjoyed the Osher program so much the last four years, I relish the opportunity to contribute as a Council Member.

**Barbara Leondar:** I have served on Council, chaired the Curriculum Committee and edited the catalog. I share the majority view that Osher provides a superlative program. But Osher is not perfect. We have barely begun to use the talents of our remarkable membership. The knowledge and skills of Osher members are an underused asset that, if elected, I would seek to integrate into our activities.

**Neil Perl:** My retirement has centered on educating myself in topics I never had time to study before. OLLI has enabled me to take a variety of courses at UCSD and other universities. I value my time at UCSD and want to help keep the OLLI program here at the high level we have today.

**Madelyn Reina:** I have been married for 39 years and my husband and I have 3 granddaughters and are very involved with the family. Osher just completes my life and I am very happy to be a part of this fine organization.

**Judy Russell (incumbent):** OSHER is an exciting place and I am continually stimulated by its lectures and various classes. I want to ensure that OSHER maintains its outstanding program for our members and that it continues to grow in both membership and curriculum.

Grace Lee
858-246-7003
2012 Osher Nominations and Elections Committee, Chairperson
**CROSS CULTURAL EXCHANGES**

**Burt Levine, English Language Tutor**

Burt Levine, a former corporate attorney and native of New York City has been an Osher member since 1997, when he retired and moved to San Diego. Burt is also active in the English-in-Action (EIA) Tutor Program through the International Center at UC San Diego. He began tutoring in the program in 1998 and has tutored over 15 students and scholars from all over the world. Burt stated that the most enjoyable aspect of tutoring is learning more about the students and their cultures. He has developed life-long friendships with his tutees and stays in touch with most of them.

Burt’s current tutee is Yeejin Lee from Korea, a PhD student in Electrical & Computer Engineering. Burt shared that Yeejin is bright and enthusiastic and puts a lot of effort into learning English, as well as in her studies.

During Burt’s tutoring sessions, he talks with Yeejin about U.S. holidays, manners, and current events. Conversely, he asks her to tell him about holidays and customs in Korea. He also encourages all of his tutees to take time to explore San Diego and the surrounding area.

Burt adds that tutoring with the EIA program is a worthwhile and satisfying experience. He believes that the real benefit of the program is that it gives Americans a chance to get to know international students and scholars and to learn about the similarities and interesting differences among the cultures. If you are interested in becoming a tutor in the EIA program, please contact Shelly Taskin at (858) 534-0603 or iprograms@ucsd.edu.

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**A SPECIAL INVITATION FROM DANA LEVINE**

Dana Levine invites Osher member to the Gotthelf Art Gallery at the Lawrence Jewish Community Center, 4126 Executive Dr., La Jolla, to see an exhibition of digital art and photograph. Dana is one of the featured artists. Evolution in Resolution Digital Art and Photography is on view until Wednesday, May 23.

Artists have been working with digital media for several decades, using painting, fractals, photography or a combination of these mediums along with sophisticated computer software to produce a new take on what contemporary art is about. This is a not-to-be-missed exhibition.

Dana also has two abstract photographs in the show, New Directions in Art, at the La Jolla Riford Library, 7555 Draper Ave., La Jolla, from March 4 through May 11. If you visit the library in the next few months, stop in the Community Room to see the exhibition.

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**THIS IS WHAT OUR MEMBERS HAVE TO SAY ABOUT OUR CLASSES**

There is always a multitude of great Osher programs. I particularly enjoyed the presentations by Bruno Leone.

**Alan Haubenstock**

My favorite class is French with Francoise. Thank you Francoise!!

**Antonio Valderrama**
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SOME OF THE WINTER SPEAKERS
If you have any questions about the 2012 OLLI National Conference, please do not hesitate to contact Fran Myers by email (fmyers@usm.maine.edu) or by phone at 207-228-8256.

May is Older Americans Month

May is Older Americans Month (http://www.aoa.gov/aoaroot/Press_Room/Observances/oam/archive/archive.aspx). This year’s theme is Never Too Old to Play. With this theme, the Administration on Aging encourages older Americans to stay engaged, active and involved in their own lives and in their communities. OLLI members don’t usually need much encouragement to have a good time, but you might want to consider a May activity to honor the month, a favorite in the Pagan calendar for raucous celebration.

2012 Rachel Carson Sense of Wonder Contest

The EPA Aging Initiative announced that the 2012 Rachel Carson Sense of Wonder Contest will focus on water -- this is the 40th anniversary of the Clean Water Act. The EPA is partnering with Generations United, the Dance Exchange, Rachel Carson Council and the National Center for Creative Aging. Contest rules can be found here (http://www.epa.gov/aging/resources/thesenseofwonder/index.htm).

Entries must be from a team of two or more people -- at least one younger person and one older person.