The Tufts University Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (LLI) has begun a new and exciting chapter with the Community Ambassadors Program (CAP). Recognizing the great resource of our study group leaders and the need for community outreach, Osher has begun to build the foundation for a successful relationship between local community groups and YOU. We are relying on you as potential study group leaders, as Community Ambassadors, individuals will also be able to improve upon their knowledge and share what we have developed. As Community Ambassadors, individuals will also be able to improve upon their knowledge and experience through outreach.

As the world deals with a financial crisis, we can look to the past to see how to react. Should we become insular and protective? Can we ignore the crisis and wait for it to pass? Or should we take the opportunity to reach out, expand beyond what we have built? It is impossible to answer that question for each individual. However, we know the great benefits that from engaging with the world, beginning right here in our local communities. Take the time to consider the lively and welcoming community that Osher has built and you will realize the need to share that experience with the broader community. All of us have the opportunity to further the goal of refreshing, regenerating, and reaching out: Carpe diem!

by Ivan Rasmussen
Dear Friends,

Summer brings sunshine, opportunities to relax and enjoy the most grueling winter in recent times and no spring at all, it is most welcomed. A colleague, Ara Rogers, Director of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at the University of South Florida suggested to her members recently that Gwendolyn Brooks in this quotation stated that older age can be about embracing the necessary and discarding the extraneous; “As you get older, you find that often the wheat, disentangling itself from the chaff, comes out to meet you.” For me and seemingly all of you it’s learning that is fundamental to our well being and spirit. We thrive on meeting new people, discovering new ideas and having new experiences and our inner world seems to expand as we engage in life and learning.

Almost ten years ago our programs were organized around the premise that third agers (us) require intellectual stimulation, physical activity and social engagement and that learning is the essence of our work. It was intended that in each Osher LLI class you would cultivate your mind as you participated in spirited discussions with fellow students and that you would form many new friendships through participation in the our program. Ultimately, as members from all walks of life we would talk, learn, share and grow together. The design was that through the efforts and energy of many extraordinary people we would offer a plethora of challenging courses that gave the music its excitement and verve.

Tufts University Osher Lifelong Learning Institute
Marilyn Blumsack, Director: marilyn.blumsack@tufts.edu
Lisa Verdile, Program Coordinator: lisa.trapasso@tufts.edu
Graduate Students: I. Rasmussen, E. Mahaffy, E. Graber

![Image]

**Osher Session Schedule 2009-2010**

**Fall 2009**
- September 14 – November 9
- (no classes on October 12)

**Winter 2010**
- January 11 – February 8
- (no classes on January 18)

**Spring 2010**
- March 15 – May 10
- (no classes on April 19)

**Summer 2010**
- June 1 – 10

**Community Outreach: What Can You Do?**

**Ambassador for a DAY**

With the recent move towards nationwide service particularly targeted towards ‘third agers’, Osher seeks to reach out to local communities. The Ambassador for a Day Program was initiated when several Osher members and prominent Tufts alumnae offered a full day, peer learning event in Sarasota, Florida.

The event consisted of two, two-hour long peer learning sessions, conducted by experienced study group leaders. First, “The Period Between the Wars” conducted by Ken Fettig, examined the highlights of the administrations of the presidents of the US, American social and political movements and the events in Europe that precipitated WWII. Comparisons between the events leading to the fall of the stock market in the 1920s and the present were also discussed. A question and answer period followed.

After lunch, Dorothy Burstein, presented “George Gershwin,” his (abbreviated) complex life, music and contemporary celebrities, and the nature of his work with Ira, his brother and lyricist. The group tapped their feet, sang along, and enjoyed the popular tunes of the 20s and 30s and even some of the social movements that gave the music its excitement and verve.

Reaching out to the community has been facilitated by the Ambassador for a Day Program!

**OSHER COMMENT BOARD**

“Let me tell you that my experience at Osher Institute for the last one month was wonderful, and it was my delight to meet and communicate with the group members who both encouraged and challenged me in and outside class.”

“... the SGL is very responsive to each individual with exploitations and questions that catapult you forward in your writing experience ... I would highly recommend this course to every friend interested in writing.”

“This was my first Osher LLI class. I didn’t know what to expect, but it was GREAT! It exceeded my expectations!”

“This course was very successful as it represents the best in lifelong learning because it had a well informed SGL, an interesting subject, created an incentive to do independent research and an opportunity to discuss the subject with an active group of class members”

“I enjoyed participating in the course very much ... the SGL’s comments were very helpful and I thoroughly enjoyed interacting with the others in the course. I look forward to taking the course again and definitely believe it has a place in the Osher Curriculum.”

“I just loved this course, the book, the handouts, my fellow students and Fred (Laffert). A super experience. Thank you!”

“I thoroughly enjoyed this class. Fran (Lanouette) is an interesting speaker, who combined her love of the subject with her great sense of humor. I would highly recommend this class.”

“This was an excellent study group. The SGL was informative and the class participation was perfect. I would recommend class to anyone.”

“I loved my class and I love the program.”

---

Osher Outlook May 2009

Page 2

Tufts University Osher Lifelong Learning Institute
Marilyn Blumsack, Director: marilyn.blumsack@tufts.edu
Lisa Verdile, Program Coordinator: lisa.trapasso@tufts.edu
Graduate Students: I. Rasmussen, E. Mahaffy, E. Graber

Tel: 617-627-5885/5699
Fax: 617-627-6307
http://ase.tufts.edu/lli

Page 7
Ken Fettig and Chuck Staples: Standing Osher members that know the program well, including the benefi- cits of co-leading a seminar. They combined forces to tackle the crucial and highly debated historical period be- tween World Wars I and II. The historical content of this period is rich, but Ken took significant lessons beyond the chronicles of history. He found that:

The co-leading experience has been interesting and rewarding for me, and I hope useful to the program. Preparing and delivering a course is hard work and takes a lot of time since the courses are not subjects which I specialized in throughout my career. I did find them rewarding at the conclusion and hope our learners did as well. The opportunity to co-lead al- lowed me to share the work and the experience with another person and to get deeper into the subjects because I had to prepare for a smaller portion of the course. Chuck, my co-leader, and I also familiarized ourselves with that portion of the sessions we were not leading to assist each other with details and were able to add to each others’ presentations. It was sort of double coverage and occasionally we would disagree on points which facilitated discussion among the learners. We also had different perspectives on some subjects which I believe helped the class to understand some of the complexities of the subjects. All in all it was a worthwhile experience.

When attempting to tackle difficult historical and current issues, a plurality of opinions and perspectives is vital. What Ken and Chuck offered was the opportunity to contrast different ideas and viewpoints. Not only did this enrich the course, but it also allowed the pair of SGLs to explore major subjects with more depth and breadth than usual. The experience embodies the Osher goal of intel- lectual fulfillment.

Even planning for the seminar, “What If?”, was collabora- tive. Bob and Fred met a few times to discuss the structure of the course. Together, they came up with a focus on counterfactual cases in American history from the Civil War to the Watergate Affair. The co-leading effort in this one class may even have spillover into other similar Osher courses such as “Great Decisions”. It is exciting to see how, through the spirit of community and mutual support, individual efforts can combine and be magnified!

In the end, co-leading not only allows an SGL to share the responsibility of an Osher course, but it also helps to know that you have a friend to back you up when in class. In fact, being an SGL serves the social advantage of truly getting to know a wider range of Osher participants. Most importantly, the opportunity to co-lead a seminar was truly an educational experience. Bob felt he learned more during his time co-leading than even in previous classes where he was a participant but not an SGL. It may be cliché, but in co-leading you get out of it what you put in, and you know that you are going through the experience with the support of a peer and friend.

The Co-Leading Perspective: Sharing Knowledge Together

Fred Laffert and Bob Pride: “What If? You Co-lead?”

As Osher LLI courses are based on the participation of Study Group Leaders from our own knowledge base and participant group, it was only fitting for Bob Pride to join forces with Fred Laffert to co-lead the successful course “What If?”. In the process, Bob was able to gain valuable insight into how to lead an Osher course at the same time as being able to share the logistical burdens of the seminar.

Co-leading a course can be the perfect segue into your first SGL experience. For Bob, it was important to be able to work with Fred because they played well off one another in each class. They agreed to split the time into two sections based on two articles. Both SGLs were prepared to inject some questions to keep the dialogue vibrant. It was amazing to see how the seminar became participant-focused rather than a more historical lecture. It is not sur- prising that Bob was glad to “not be on the stage all the time,” encouraging class participation to facilitate scintil- lating discussion.

REMINDER: Our offices are temporarily located in the Mayer Campus Center (Rooms 207-208) on 44 Professors Row!
by Dot Dudley, Osher Travel Guide Extraordinaire

Having just returned from Barcelona and Mallorca, the most recent travel adventure of our Osher LLI members, I’m happy to share some highlights of the trip with our readers.

In Barcelona, we sampled the architecture and history of the city in a variety of walking tours. A visit to Guell Park, a fantasyland of Gaudi design, provided gorgeous bird-eye views out over the city to the sparkling Mediterranean. Then, the Old City (Barri Gotic) revealed its Roman past in surprising ways: in an outcropping of the original city wall or in ruined columns tucked into the courtyard of a 19th century structure. The labyrinthine streets conjured spirits of medieval Barcelona’s religious life and commercial importance as we made our way through narrow passages to the cathedral of Maria del Mar, to the Picasso Museum, and on down to the Ramblas and the Boqueria (market), before ultimately arriving at the busy port, updated and modernized for the 1992 Olympics. Our hotel was well placed in the Eixample district that featured posh shops and La Pedrera, Gaudi’s remarkable moderniste apartment building, rivaled only perhaps by his stunning — yet unfinished — church, La Sagrada Familia.

In addition to Barcelona’s attractions, our journey included a day trip to the Benedictine Monastery at Montserrat. Perched on a rocky ledge, carved from the mountain, the monastery is reached by a cable gondola that requires a real “leap of faith” as it swings out over the abyss and slowly makes its climb to the mountaintop. The emotional mixture of awe and wonder touched us all as we pondered the contemplative lives that had been spent in such isolation! Then, giddy perhaps from our cable ride back to terra firma, we gaved in to total indulgence and made our way to the ancient town of Cardona for lunch in a 19th century castle, where we were treated royally, indeed.

Yet another day trip took us to the town of Girona, a beautifully preserved medieval town that boasts a magnificent cathedral and a substantially intact Jewish quarter. A museum of Jewish life and culture in medieval Girona brought the past to life for us. After an al fresco lunch in a sunny square, we ensured our return by kissing the lion statue at the edge of town. (This may sound simple enough, but the lion is placed high on a pole, and requires another “leap of faith” to reach!) Several of our merry band accomplished the feat—others took pictures that are worth 1,000 words. Our next stop was the Salvador Dali Museum, full of fun and fantasy, including the famous portrait of Abraham Lincoln, composed of many smaller paintings for a “pixelated” effect, the optically elusive portrait of Mae West, and Dali’s wildly decorated 1937 Cadillac.

At last, bidding adieu to Barcelona, we flew to the island of Mallorca, for our vacation-within-a-vacation. Once away from the activity of the big city, we relaxed in the quiet village of Andratx, nestled in a valley among fragrant citrus groves. Our hotel featured such breathtaking views of the mountains above that we were reluctant to break away for excursions to Palma de Mallorca, the capital city; to Valldemossa, where Chopin and George Sand spent the winter of 1838-39; and to the village of Deia, where author/poet Robert Graves lived and died—all spectacular views! For those who wished to relax in the village, a quant little tram made the 10 minute jaunt past trees, heavy with oranges and lemons, from the village down to the port of Soller with its small but picturesque harbor and shops. Our Spanish idyll ended all too soon—but the return to chilly March reality was softened by wonderful, warm memories of good food, good times, and great friends.

Don’t Miss the Opportunity to Join Dot this Fall in England!

September 7—13, 2009

“From Beowulf to Virginia Woolf”

A custom-designed adventure exploring Cambridge and East Anglia

Register now at: www.aue.tufts.edu/lli

The White Tiger: A Novel by Aravind Adiga

This novel reveals the underbelly of Indian society. It is a stark contrast to the rise of a middle class, which is a result of their developing technology industry. Although these developments are changing India’s image as a nation of poverty, much still exists. This book is hated by many Indians and has been banned in parts of India.

Balram Halwai narrates his story which he titles The Autobiography of a Half-Baked Indian, by writing to Premier Wen Jiabao of China, who will be visiting India. Balram’s father was a rickshaw puller, poor, but a man of honor and courage. His mother died when he was very young. They lived in the town of Laxmangarh, which the people of the town refer to as “The Darkness,” because this is where the poor and lowly live without shelter, water, good health or money. “The Light” refers to the areas where those who hold the power live, the wealthy and unscrupulous landlords.

Balram has succeeded in spite of his minimal schooling. He had been a bright student and was offered a scholarship. However, his family needed money so he was pulled out of school. Under their system, you can’t go to school if you are needed to earn money, making it almost impossible to complete your education. He has triumphed in moving to Bangalore where he became a chauffeur for Mr. Ashok and his wife Pinky Madam. At first, Blaram sends money home to his grasping grandmother, Kusum. In time, he weighs what is best for himself against his loyalty and duty to his family. He is determined that he will not be a victim and looks to the future. His motto is if you can see beauty in the world, you are not a slave.

The night his inebriated mistress, Pinky Madam, takes over the driving of the car leaves Balram by the side of the road we feel Balram’s vulnerability with poignant clarity. He is bereft of any security and is completely and totally dependent on his masters. He has nothing without them. Pinky Madam comes back for him. To make matters worse she has killed a child. His master’s solution is to tell Balram that he is a member of their family, therefore he will ‘own up’ to being responsible for the accident. The accident is not reported so nothing comes of it. Eventually Balram kills Mr. Ashok and takes the bag of payoff money Mr. Ashok was giving to a politician for a favor.

Balram becomes successful after fleeing to Delhi. He bribes the police to overlook that he is a wanted man and establishes a taxi service for workers in the technology field. In this dog eat dog and corrupt part of society, he has become morally ambivalent but he can at last feel that he is not a servant/slave.

This page turner not only gives insights into present day India but it is different, humorous and raises many questions, from who is benefiting from India’s economic growth to where does one draw the line between what one has to do for oneself and for one’s family.