

## President's Corner



Thanks to those of you who have already responded to our Friends of Osher annual appeal or who will in the near future. Our solicitation letter was sent in November, if you did not receive one, please let us know. Thanks also to all those who sent in a gift in memory of Carl Larson, past President and avid OSHER@Dartmouth supporter. We will be thanking all those who have donated to OSHER@Dartmouth by name in the program at the annual meeting at the end of our fiscal year. If you prefer 'anonymous' to your real name, please advise the office.

Lisa King and I attended the Osher National Conference in Charlotte, NC mid-October. It was inspiring to meet with staff and volunteers from the 119 Osher Lifelong Learning Institutes. Most call themselves "OLLI." The workshops I attended were on Diversity and Community Outreach, Growth Management and OLLI, and University Leadership Changes. I found the latter the most instructive. The two OLLI's who made the presentation, University of Dayton and George Mason University, have experienced many changes in the leadership of their host universities in the past few years. They developed specific plans for OLLI volunteers to work to enhance University needs and to get faculty participation in courses. Dartmouth's mission statement says "Dartmouth College educates the most promising students and

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## Study Leader Profile:

### Jürgen Ewert



Imagine what it would be like to be a freshman in college and have the secret police try to persuade you to recruit your cousin to become a spy for the government.

How about living in a country where government officials decide if you can rent an apartment for you and your family, if you can change jobs, can even take away your freedom to travel with the explanation that it's intended to protect you from the "Imperialistic Western World"?

Students who took Jürgen Ewert's class, "My Life in East Germany," don't need to wonder because they heard about it from a man who lived through it.

Born in Soviet-occupied Germany in September of 1949 - just two weeks before it became the German Democratic Republic (GDR, or East Germany) - Jürgen learned first-hand the mind-numbing frustration of living under constant state control with lit-

tle hope of ever fulfilling even modest aspirations.

Jürgen was born in a small town near the Baltic and, being a good student, took an academic track that eventually led to the Technical University in Ilmenau, Thuringia, E. Germany, where he completed his studies for a degree in electrical engineering. It was during his first year there that he was visited by an officer of *Stasi*, the dreaded secret police, who, after showing Jürgen his identification, took him out for beers at the best restaurant in town. The officer already knew that Jürgen had an elderly aunt in West Germany with whom he corresponded. He also knew that the aunt had encouraged Jürgen to write to his cousin, Christine, whom he had never met, and who was working in Brussels for the European Union. The officer knew that Jürgen had written Christine one letter, suggesting that they correspond on a regular basis and try to get to

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## Notes From the Finance Committee

In previous editions of “Notes” we looked at our day-to-day operations and how the dues and fees that we pay in are used to put on the classes, lectures and the other events we all enjoy. Our General Operating fund in the fiscal year that ended June 30, 2015 came close to achieving our budget goal of a zero balance of revenue versus expense – we had a deficit on our operations of \$6,629, just 1.8% of expenses, which was amply covered by our operating cash reserve built up over past years.

But if daily activities are funded by the General Operating fund, how do we pay for new equipment (classroom projectors, replacement office furniture, etc.) and other infrastructure-like projects? This is where your tax-deductible donations to the Friends of OSHER@ Dartmouth fund, previously Friends of ILEAD fund, are so important. Over the last three years the generosity of you, our members, in donating to this fund has allowed us to purchase over \$24,000 of equipment and complete projects of various types at DOC House. The fund retains a healthy balance - \$35,404 at June 30, 2015. Looking ahead your Finance Committee is engaged in a project to upgrade our online



registration system. The planned changes will provide a smoother experience for members as you renew your membership, enroll in a class, or purchase a ticket for one of our many events, and more functionality for the office staff. Look for an improved system in early 2016.

Our Memorial Gifts fund is more modest in its scope but no less valuable to our organization. We deeply appreciate the bequests and donations made to this fund in memoriam. Gifts are used for the purpose specified in the bequest. When no specific use is attached to a gift, monies are used for projects approved by your Leadership Council that are consistent with the concept of memorializing the donor or individual in whose name the gift is made. Projects may be capital items or member-related benefits or events. The balance in the Memorial Gifts fund on June 30, 2015 was \$3,855.

In the next newsletter we will discuss our endowment from the Bernard Osher Foundation and how members will be benefiting from the income derived from investing the principal. We hope you find the information in these “Notes” helpful. Please send any questions or comments to the Osher office; someone from the Finance Committee will get back to you.

Your Finance Committee has openings for additional committee members. While a number of individuals on the committee have accounting backgrounds, this is not an essential qualification. We welcome members who have experience in accounting, managing budgets, fund raising, operations, and change management. Individuals will support the program chairs in the development and management of budgets, as well as address financial management issues through ad hoc committees. The full Finance Committee meets monthly, usually on the third Thursday, currently at 12:00 pm. If you are interested in joining this committee, please contact Lisa King in the Osher office.

*- Iain Sim, Treasurer and Chairman, Finance Committee*

## Celebrate Our 25th Anniversary

We’re trying to create more awareness of our great organization, now celebrating its 25th Anniversary. The decal (shown below) is glue-free and adheres to the inside of any glass surface in your car. Please help us spread the word by proudly displaying this free decal in your car. They’re available at the office at 7 Lebanon Street anytime, and in the lobby at the DOC House when classes are in session. **This is a great way we can all help to increase our membership!**

# Never Stop Learning



OSHER@Dartmouth

Discovering the new. The provocative. The timeless.

## Memorial Fund

I want to take this opportunity to thank those of you who gave so generously to the fund to honor the memory of Carl Larson. As a past ILEAD (now OSHER@Dartmouth) President and avid lifelong learner I know he would have been proud to be remembered this way.

*- Sylvia Sands Paxton*

## The Vast Place: A Journey through Namibia

Namibia is a vast country, even by African standards, covering an area approximately twice the size of California, but with a population of a mere 2 million – the second lowest density in the world. Namibia is also a diverse country, rich in culture, wildlife, and dramatic desert scenery. In the Spring of 2016 I'll be offering a course on Namibia as part of the Study/Travel Program along with a 13 day safari through this fascinating country. In this Osher course we'll learn the history and geography of many of the places we'll visit while on safari. You'll be well prepared for your journey! Even if you're not joining the safari, you will learn about Namibia, its diverse cultures, and their unique approach to wildlife conservation.

In recent decades Namibia has risen to the forefront of African wildlife conservation. Their conservancy program, where local people are allowed to benefit from the wildlife living on their land, has become a rare success story. Many species that were nearly exterminated in the past century have rebounded and their numbers continue to grow. Desert adapted elephants and lions now roam the dry river beds. Namibia has the largest population of black rhinos found outside of national parks and is also home to more cheetahs than anywhere in Africa as well as a wide diversity of antelopes, birds, and

unique plant life. During our trip we'll track black rhinos on foot, search for desert elephants and meet with rangers and conservation groups working to protect Namibia's natural heritage.

Namibia is famous for stunning desert landscapes, wide open spaces, and enormous sand dunes. The Namib Desert may appear lifeless but a closer look reveals an abundance of unique animals and plants supremely adapted to survive in this arid environment. Beetles that drink fog, lizards that swim in the sand, and bizarre plants that store water in their swollen trunks. We'll examine the ecology and formation of this ancient desert and throughout the safari witness many of these fascinating life forms.

Diverse groups of people also call Namibia home. From the nomadic (and very traditional) Himba to the Bushmen of the Kalahari, Herero, Nama, Damara, Germans, and Afrikaners, Namibia is a wealth of cultures. We'll explore the history and cultures of these various groups and visit an authentic Himba village where you can interact with the villagers and learn about their traditions and daily life.

Namibia is a fascinating, safe, and exciting destination. I hope you can join our exploration of The Vast Place.

- Daniel Hopkins

*Study Leader Profile (cont.)*

know each other better, even though they were separated by the Iron Curtain. The officer suggested that Jürgen invite his cousin to East Berlin, where she could make some money on the black market by smuggling in electronic equipment. Jürgen was evasive and asked for some time to consider it. The agent left him with the words, "we'll be in touch..." Jürgen realized that Stasi's plan was to recruit his cousin to spy against the EU, but he didn't let on that he knew. Many sleepless nights followed. He never wrote Christine again.

After the Helsinki Accords Jürgen was able to travel in the West for "humanitarian purposes" with his brother to visit their aunt in Bavaria. Jürgen's wife and children were forced to remain behind. On the way home he spent a few hours in West Berlin and was mesmerized by the excitement and vitality of the people. Returning to East Berlin he had a growing sense of depression.

In August of 1989 Jürgen was visiting relatives in New Jersey. He decided never to return to East Germany. Three months later, East German official Günter Schabowski mistakenly announced that East Germans would be allowed to travel freely to the West, and the resulting surge of people to the Berlin Wall was unstoppable. The Wall fell. Jürgen, who was now working with a cousin in Woodstock, VT, joyfully brought his wife Helga and their daughter Nicole to the United States.

Fortunately for Osher at Dartmouth, Jürgen will be teaching another course based on the book *The Collapse* by Mary Elise Sarotte, which chronicles the events surrounding the accidental opening of the Berlin Wall in 1989. If this new class follows the usual pattern for Jürgen's courses, it will fill to capacity.

Jürgen lives with his wife Helga in Woodstock, VT.

- Steve Tofel

## FRIENDS OF OSHER FUND

By now you should have received the Friends of Osher Fund annual appeal letter. This is the only letter you will receive this year regarding the fund.

**Thank you for your support!**

2016  
**SPRING TERM**  
**March 21 - May 20**  
Look for your catalog in  
January!



# OSHER@Dartmouth

Discovering the new. The provocative. The timeless.

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### President's Corner (cont.)

prepares them for a lifetime of learning and of responsible leadership, through a faculty dedicated to teaching and the creation of knowledge." We work with Dartmouth through the Office of the Provost. Strong bonds, communication, and visibility are key to our support at Dartmouth and to advance our goals of growth and well-being. We will incorporate some of the strategies learned at the Conference in our collaboration with the College.

- Sylvia Paxton



OSHER@Dartmouth hosted our first Book Fair on November 7th, 2015 at the DOC House. Member Iain Sim was on hand to take photos of the event.

**Left:** Authors Jeff Bendis and Barbara Butler greet visitors to their table. **Above:** Author Kathryn Samuelson stands at her table.



### Lisa's Corner



Dear Members and Friends,

OSHER@Dartmouth relies on a merging of effort between staff members and volunteers in order to operate on a day-to-day basis. What is happening behind the scenes that enables you to enjoy your Osher courses? How do the course offerings appear in the catalog? Who makes the coffee at the DOC House? How are all of the mailings prepped and sent? Who is answering the phone at the Osher office?

Would you consider sharing your expertise or passion by volunteering one day a month, or even a few hours a month? There are a wide variety of tasks and responsibilities that need your support!

We would love to hear from you. There are many opportunities to lend a hand and to give back to the organization you enjoy! Give us a call and we will find a way to match your skills with a task. Contact Susan Cohen at [sncohen037@gmail.com](mailto:sncohen037@gmail.com), or call me, Lisa King, at 603-646-0154 or email me at [Lisa.L.King@dartmouth.edu](mailto:Lisa.L.King@dartmouth.edu). We look forward to hearing from you!