



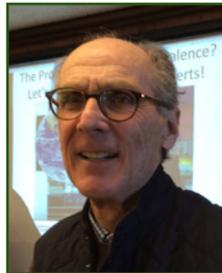
OSHER@Dartmouth

Discovering the new. The provocative. The timeless.

Spring 2019 Newsletter

Dennis Stern - A Life in Journalism

Fake news? Real news? Sometimes it can be hard to tell. Dennis Stern spent a career making sure that only the latter got reported and now teaches OSHER@Dartmouth members how to quickly tell the difference in his course on Media Literacy.



Long before he retired to Lyme with his wife and fellow study leader Barbara, Dennis Stern was a travel writer. A product of Whitefish Bay, WI (fans of Gordon Lightfoot will remember that this is where the Edmund Fitzgerald could have escaped the gale “had she put 15 more miles behind her”) he was in the fifth grade when his parents took the family on a trip to Mexico. A woman who edited the PTA newsletter asked him to write an account of the trip. It was published – with his name in the byline – and he was hooked. His credentials now firmly

established, he went on to edit his summer camp newspaper in northern Wisconsin. Next, he co-edited the Whitefish Bay Tower Times, his high school newspaper, where his co-editor was Michael Schudson, now a professor at the Columbia School of Journalism. That’s an impressive team for a high school newspaper. The Whitefish Bay Tower Times was his last stint as a pro bono journalist because the local newspaper, The Whitefish Bay Herald, asked him to cover his high school’s sports teams and they paid real money – 10 cents an inch. It was, he notes, an inspiration to write longer articles.

Writing for the Herald, Dennis learned the hard way not to use clichés, especially ones he was unfamiliar with. Writing about the state finals in track he reported that “it was a bad day at Black Rock for the Blue Dukes.” His editor, also ap-



“Fiddleheads” - by Anne Baird

parently unfamiliar with the expression, created the headline, “Blue Dukes Bomb at Black Rock”. Unfortunately, the finals were held in Menomonee Falls.

The episode of the botched headline was followed by a very positive experience for a young reporter when he was able to regularly interview the former legendary Marquette University basketball coach Jack Nagle, who, after taking Marquette to the NCAA Elite Eight for the first time in its history, had left the college ranks to coach and teach at Dennis’ high school. Here’s how Dennis describes the experience: “For me, this was learning that journalism opens doors to a ‘serious’ reporter. Who knew, the first time I approached Nagle in the coach’s office after a home game, that he’d invite me in and answer all my (naive?) questions and offer his own insights to questions I didn’t ask. He was a veteran when

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President’s Corner



As this newsletter goes to press, we are very proud to announce a successful first live-stream of this year’s Camden Conference: “Is This China’s Century?” The Camden Conference is an annual event, now in its 32nd year, which was begun by retired OSS Officers (Forerunner of the CIA) to continue their lifelong interest in foreign affairs and policy. It rapidly outgrew its original venue at the Camden, Maine Opera House, and for a number of years has live-streamed to satellite sites in Rockland, Belfast, and Portland, Maine. We feel honored to have been able to offer it to our community. It took place at DHMC’s Auditorium H

in February. We were able to offer very low ticket prices thanks to a generous gift by Pete Fahey and Philip McCaull of Commonwealth Financial Network. Next year’s Camden Conference will be February 21-23.

Our 2019 Summer Lecture Series will be on Thursdays from July 11 through August 15. This year’s series is titled “Critical Thinking and the Protection of Democracy.” We plan a series of debates featuring two speakers and a moderator looking at a host of issues central to our Constitution and Bill of Rights, including the right to bear arms, freedom of speech and the press, and more. We anticipate that it will be lively, provocative, and civil!

As many of you know, the College has entered a large, campus planning effort, which is hoped to finish this year. Along with the death of Joe Asch, who was the

champion for redevelopment of the Golf Clubhouse on Route 10, this has delayed OSHER@Dartmouth’s hope to move forward with space of our own with them. In the meantime, the College, DHMC, and Kendal at Hanover have begun discussions of working together to create additional Kendal independent living units, multi-generational housing for graduate students and young faculty, and are talking with us about including space for Osher. While this is in its infancy, the prospect of building in conjunction with Kendal is a very exciting one. We continue to be open to all ideas that will promote classroom and Osher office space under one roof. We will keep all of you apprised of these developments. As I look out my window at a robust mountain of snow, it is heartening to think that flowers will replace it in the very near future!

Study Leader Profile (cont.)

it came to talking to the “press” and I was the rookie. A great learning experience. And he seemed happy to see me each time I stood on the threshold to his office after a game.”

The Haverford College newspaper was where he got his first job as a “real editor” running a newspaper with a budget, staff and deadlines. (He encouraged classmate Dave Barry to join the college paper which turned out to be a good start for Barry, who went on to join the Miami Herald and win the Pulitzer Prize for his humorous commentary.) By his sophomore year Dennis knew that editing a newspaper was what he wanted to do for the rest of his career.

Up to this point, graduation always ended one phase of Dennis’ newspaper work and finishing college at Haverford meant that he no longer ran a paper. A law degree was something that he always thought would be useful, so he enrolled at NYU School of Law and, while getting his law degree, got a job as a reporter with the Associated Press (AP). Upon graduation he applied for a job as a reporter for the Miami News, but instead was hired as the assistant news editor. After almost two years at the News he joined the AP again, this time in the Trenton, NJ, bureau where he got to use his law degree covering the New Jersey Supreme Court. After only five months in Trenton a friend told him that the Washington Star was looking for an assistant metro editor, and his editor at the AP told him that he’d be crazy not to take it. Those five months marked the end of his career as a reporter.

He arrived in Washington the month after Nixon resigned, at a paper still licking its wounds from having been badly scooped on Watergate by the Washington Post. They were looking to make some changes and within a year he had assumed the role of metro editor, a job he would hold for the next six years until the paper folded due to some poor management decisions by Time Inc., which, says Dennis, never really understood the

newspaper business.

One other great life changing event happened in Washington; he met his future wife Barbara.

Despite Star’s demise, the newspaper business was still in pretty good shape and the New York Times let it be known that they would interview anyone from the Star. Dennis went for an interview and the result was the beginning of a 28-year career at the Times.

A. M. Rosenthal was the executive editor when he arrived, and for the next 12 years he worked as an editor in the metropolitan, national, and Sunday business sections. Max Frankel, the Pulitzer prize winning reporter and columnist, who had spent his entire career at the Times, took over as executive editor in 1986. Dennis talks of him with both respect and affection. “He (Frankel) really got it, he understood reporters, he understood the newspaper business, he understood the Times, he just really got it.”

Dennis’ next executive editor was Joseph Lelyveld, who assumed the role in 1994. His relationship with Lelyveld was clearly a good one because in early 1997 Dennis got a “totally unexpected” call from Times president and general manager Janet Robinson, asking him to become the vice president of human resources. It was a move that would take him from the “editorial side” of the paper to the “business side” and he wasn’t at all sure that he wanted to do it. Lelyveld offered him a “round-trip ticket” saying that if he didn’t like it on the business side he could come back to his old position. At this point he had no experience in human resources. Fortunately, a friend who headed HR for General Electric suggested a book that proved invaluable in teaching him most of what he needed to know. Unfortunately, newspapers were beginning to fall on hard times and the Times was no exception. Personnel cutbacks were needed and printing costs had to be reduced. Scott Heekin-Canedy, who had succeeded Robinson as the Times president and general manager,

asked Dennis to head a new committee tasked with strategically reducing the budget for business operations without hurting the journalism. New labor contracts were negotiated and printing was reduced to one plant. Heekin-Canedy then asked Dennis to become the deputy general manager of the paper. This made him the business side’s second in command as the paper began the fraught journey from newsprint to digital. It was certainly not an easy trip, but the Old Gray Lady survived and flourishes today.

Dennis retired at the end of 2009. He had been commuting from NYC to Lyme, NH, where Barbara was overseeing the construction of their retirement home, and now it was time to fully enjoy the beauty of New Hampshire in the foothills of the White Mountains. Osher (then ILEAD) member John Mathews, a friend from his days at the Washington Star, recruited Dennis to be a speaker at our Summer Lecture Series, so he was already a contributor to the organization well before he joined and became a study leader. Students in his Media Literacy class learn not only how to quickly spot “fake news”, but also get some reporting tips from an experienced editor: “Put all the important facts in the first paragraph; expand on them in the second; and put extra observations in the third. When you’re laying out the paper, working against a deadline, you don’t have time to rewrite. You just cut from the bottom up.” Good advice for all writers.

- Steve Tofel,

Marketing & Communications Committee

NEXT ART GALLERY EXHIBIT:

Lili Mayor

Abstract woodblock prints

April 9 - June 27



Treasurer's Report

I am pleased to report that your Finance Committee, in close collaboration with the various program committees, has developed the budget for Fiscal Year 2019-20. The budget has been approved by the Leadership Council and submitted to Dartmouth. Once again we have a balanced budget with a very small (0.7%) positive cash balance projected for year-end. I am sure members will be delighted to know that this budget has been achieved without any increase in membership dues, course fees, or ticket prices. And we are able to continue our programs of free lectures and Osher at the Movies series.

From time to time I am asked why we have local companies sponsor events such as our Summer Lecture Series. First, sponsorship helps local companies connect with our members and remind them of the services they offer. Second, for Osher the safety net of an underwriting sponsor allows us to experiment

with new programs where we are uncertain as to how popular an event might be. A good example is our launching of a partnership with the Camden Conference. This February we are subscribing to the live video feed of the annual foreign affairs conference that is held in Camden, Maine. We pay a subscriber fee and have other expenses related to putting on the event. Underwriting by Pete Fahey and Philip McCaull, financial advisors with the Commonwealth Financial Network at Centerra, provides us with a financial cushion in the event that ticket sales are not as robust as we project. Sometimes it takes a year or so for word to get out and an event to become a regular feature on members' calendars. Thanks to corporate sponsors we can weather the first few years of financial uncertainty. Last but by no means least, the financial support that we receive from corporate sponsors helps us to keep our fees and dues as low as possible. For your part,

I urge members to take the opportunity whenever it arises to express their thanks to those companies that support OSHER@Dartmouth.

In June 2019 two members of the Finance Committee will be required to step down, each having fulfilled two three-year terms. If you think you might like to replace one of these retiring stalwarts as a member of the Finance Committee, please come to one of our monthly meetings to "try us out". There is a lot going on beyond pouring over spreadsheets. Contact Lisa King in the office for details.

- Iain S. Sim,
Treasurer and Chairman,
Finance Committee



2019 Camden Conference

The OSHER@Dartmouth collaboration to livestream the 2019 Camden Conference, "Is This China's Century?", worked beautifully. We hosted 70 registered participants at DHMC's Auditorium H. The event began with Keynote Speaker Martin Jacques on Friday evening, February 22. Sessions continued with several more speakers and panels on Saturday, February 23. Despite predictions of snow and freezing rain, we still had a good crowd for the final sessions on Sunday morning, February 24.

Throughout the weekend, attendees at the main Camden Opera House venue and all of the live-stream sites enjoyed opportunities to ask questions of the speakers during several engaging panel discussions on both Saturday and Sunday.

Ward Wickware, a Board member of the Camden Conference, attended our sessions in Auditorium H, and was very

pleased by the DHMC venue. Rick Ellis, in charge of DHMC conference services, provided seamless connection with the Camden Opera House. He has already reserved the space for next year's Conference, which will take place from February 21-23, 2020. Next year's Conference is already well into the planning stage, and will review the role of media in global politics. It promises to be both very thorough and is well-timed, with our presidential elections taking place nine months later.

- John Sanders,
President

Top right: OSHER@Dartmouth members enjoy a break between sessions.

Bottom right: Members take their seats in Auditorium H just prior to the Sunday session of the Conference.

Photos courtesy of Richard Neugass.



Osher is a Blessing

In Fall 2013 I took my first course at Osher. At the time I was trying to pick myself up and out of the darkest period of my life. My family was falling apart, my health and profession were at risk, and so I retreated into a dark three room apartment open only to my children. I desperately needed a change of some kind.

Full disability came first and an Osher insert in the "Valley News" followed. I had seen the course offerings for several years but never ventured to try. However, when I saw that the catalog listed a course, "Massachusetts Politics 1930-1990; Anything Goes," I couldn't resist. Although a Lebanon resident since 1979 my roots were from Lawrence, MA where I was raised; my Mom and seven younger siblings still lived there. Three brothers were elected office holders in state and city politics. Though I never had any interest in the business and running of political life, the history was appealing, especially when James Michael Curley, a favorite character of mine, was mentioned. I registered immediately.

This is when Fate, planetary alignment or good old Irish luck arrived in the guise of a holy trinity. The course was fascinat-

ing, led by a professed rookie study leader named Maynard Goldman, and the roster was full of intelligent, engaging participants including Hank Buermeyer. Osher had me at "Welcome!"

At about week five of the course Hank, who had just read a piece about my recent struggles in the "Sunday Valley News," called me and filled me in on scholarship opportunities, took me under his wing and introduced me to Lisa. With her help the world of Osher opened up for me. Laura, Sarah and Diane have all been so very helpful, providing printings as needed and making sure I was managing with the crutches.

That rookie study leader, Mr. Goldman, got me hooked on ALL his political courses. That exemplifies the deep quality of Osher offerings: Study Leaders who give so freely of their time, enthusiasm and expertise. I have learned from and fully enjoyed every course, and there have been a few! The variety and quality of courses are enough to satisfy most tastes and interests.

And then there's the camaraderie, the invaluable social interaction that research shows can stimulate minds and enhance longevity in life. Since joining Osher I have

met so many fascinating people from all backgrounds and have more friends than I ever thought possible after having to leave my job as pharmacist so abruptly. My

beautiful children agree that Osher has helped their Dad keep busy and healthier, something my doctors have also noted.

So I extend a heartfelt "Thank You" to all the staff, study leaders, committee members, fellow members – everyone; but it just doesn't come close to the gratitude I have for this new quality of life revealed to me. Is that not a true gift?

That is why I preach Osher to anyone and every one who cares to listen. That's my Irish gift of gab - ask anyone!

- Brian Blanchette,
OSHER@Dartmouth Member



Our Members Like Movies

Whether it's viewing movies from a specific country or genre, movies written or directed by women, or movies organized around a central theme, the members of OSHER@Dartmouth watch and discuss movies in class after class, semester after semester. How many members have thrilled at the selections and discussions led by Study Leaders Roger Feldman, Don Watson, and Mark Lewis, among others? There have even been classes on scriptwriting!

You can also find many OSHER@Dartmouth members at the September HOP film series, Telluride@Dartmouth, at which new films are introduced, a few of which earn nominations and wins at the Oscars. And then there's the increasingly popular free OSHER@Dartmouth movie series of classic movies at the

Nugget Theater. And we can boast that at least one study leader, Samantha Davidson-Green, has produced an award-winning 'indie' film and teaches film making at Dartmouth College.

Let's face it: Movies have become perhaps the most popular art form in the world over the last fifty years. All of our members have grown up as this industry has flourished, and many of us have wonderful memories of movies and their stars and creators.

This year OSHER@Dartmouth is planning a new course that will tie in with Dartmouth's Telluride series. The course will meet during our Fall semester and will provide an introduction to the evolution of film festivals around the world. Participants will review and discuss this year's Telluride selections.

SAVE THE DATES

Spring Fling

Friday, April 5, 2019

3:00 PM - 6:00 PM

DOC House,
Hanover, NH

OSHER@Dartmouth

Annual Meeting

Wednesday, May 22, 2019

12:00 PM - 3:00 PM

The Quechee Inn at
Marshland Farm,
Quechee, VT

Summer Lecture

Series 2019

*Critical Thinking for the
Preservation of Our Democracy*
Thursdays, July 11 - August 15
9:00 AM - 11:30 AM
Spaulding Auditorium,
Hanover, NH

Registration for these events will open soon; watch our website and weekly emails for details!

Friends of Osher Annual Drive

The following list contains names of donors who contributed to our Friends of Osher Annual Drive. As of March 1, 2019, we have received gifts totaling \$21,220 from 170 households.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Spring Term 2019

March 25 - May 24

Lunch & Learn

Going Out Green

Speaker: Lee Webster

Wed., Mar. 27..... 12:00 pm - 1:30 pm

Hanover Community Center

free; pre-registration required

Tech Café

Thurs., Mar. 28..... 12:30 pm - 2:00 pm

Movie

April 10..... *The Best Years of Our Lives*

Hot Plates, Hot Topics at Jesse's Steakhouse

Refugees and Asylum Seekers

Speaker: Evangeline Monroe

Fri., Apr. 19..... 12:00 pm - 2:00 pm

\$30 per person; pre-registration required



Lisa's Corner - by Lisa King, Program Manager

This issue, I'd like to use my corner to pass along a message from our Curriculum Committee. We need YOU to become a Study Leader for OSHER@Dartmouth! Anywhere you are, whenever you hear someone talk about a great trip they took, review a book they read, or share the details of their career or experiences, consider what you find engaging about their story, and if you think your fellow OSHER@Dartmouth members would be excited to hear the same. If so, encourage that person to consider becoming an OSHER@Dartmouth Study Leader.

Our Study Leaders enjoy working with educated, engaged students who are participating due to a shared interest. There are no papers to grade and no exams to deliver. Our Curriculum Committee is available for support and guidance, and the Study Leader Support sub-committee offers a free course for new Study Leaders to help them plan and execute their own course. The sub-committee will also connect new Study Leaders with an experienced mentor should they request one. Study Leaders also receive an 'Teach One Take One' certificate at the conclusion of their course, which enables them or their partner to take one OSHER@Dartmouth course of their choice within the next calendar year. (Value of certificate is for one free course.)

If you find that you encounter people who you think would make exciting Study Leaders, please encourage them to reach out to the OSHER@Dartmouth office. You could request their name and phone number or email address and share it with us. We also have OSHER@Dartmouth contact cards available, which you can pass along to the person you are encouraging to become a Study Leader. With your help, our Curriculum Committee can continue to develop the wide variety of courses OSHER@Dartmouth offers every year. Thank you!