



# Women Who Influenced History

## **Privilege, Passion and Power of Catherine the Great of Russia**

Catherine the Great of Russia was the longest reigning ruler of Russia. Although Catherine was not Russian by birth, she seized the throne and held onto it through wars, rebellions and plagues. Power alone did not satisfy her, she wanted love, affection, friendship and humor. The lecture will explore the character of this privileged, passionate and powerful woman.

**Speaker:** *Marie Levin*

Marie Levin retired from a career in laboratory medicine with degrees in biology, chemistry and marketing. She and her husband Herb raised seven children, all college graduates. An avid history buff, she became interested in the life of Catherine the Great after a trip to Russia.

## **Eleanor Roosevelt**

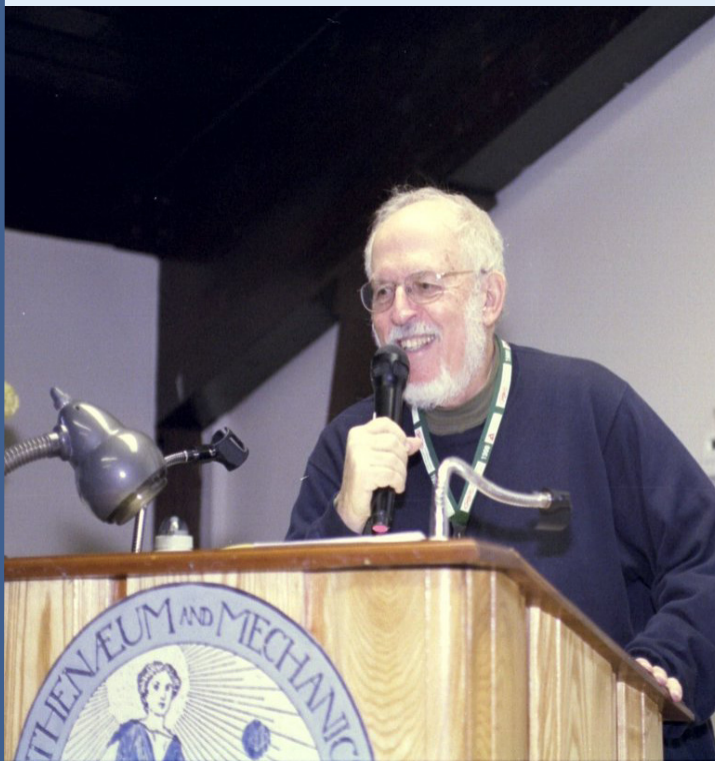
Eleanor Roosevelt was one of the titanic figures of 20th century American history, quite distinct from, but fully the equal of, her husband, Franklin Delano Roosevelt. From her early years as a lonely orphan lacking in confidence, she turned her life into a crusade for justice for all, both at home and abroad. Her evolution is a fascinating study of a gifted and resolute woman's ability to transcend daunting personal and emotional obstacles on her way to becoming the pivotal mover of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights and the inspiration for millions of men and women throughout the world. This presentation will be one of discovering the complexity, passion, achievements and challenges of this most remarkable American.

**Speaker:** *Kathy Krebs*

Kathy Krebs is a retired school counselor of almost thirty years. Initially an undergraduate and graduate major in political science, she has never lost her fascination and love for history and studying the great tides of political change. She is a long-time admirer of Eleanor and respects her all the more having researched and prepared this course. Eleanor's indomitable spirit is a challenge to all of us to discover our best selves.

**OSHER Lifelong Learning Institute at RIT**  
where curious minds gather

## SPEAKERS CATALOG



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**OSHER Lifelong Learning Institute at RIT**  
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Rochester, New York 14623  
(585)292-8989 [www.Osher.RIT.edu](http://www.Osher.RIT.edu)

# The Osher Speakers

## THE OSHER LIFELONG LEARNING INSTITUTE AT RIT

OSHER, formerly The Athenaeum, is a unique educational organization that offers a wide-ranging choice of classes to adults over age 50 who have a thirst for lifelong learning. Courses are presented in a variety of fields: among them are the arts, literature, sciences, history and government.

The Athenaeum, now the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, was founded in 1987 at the Rochester Institute of Technology. Members represent a wealth of backgrounds, professional and personal experiences. Courses are developed and conducted by members willing to share their experiences. Some classes are led by professionals who have distinguished themselves in their working years and are now eager to communicate their knowledge and insight. Other courses arise out of avocations or enthusiastic interests.

### THE OSHER SPEAKERS

Osher is pleased to offer speakers to groups and organizations in the community through our Osher Speakers program. Choose speakers for your organization from among the wide-ranging topics offered. Topic areas include the arts, literature, history, government, personal development and science/technology.

### HOW TO SCHEDULE A SPEAKER

Find a topic of interest? Scheduling is easy. Simply call the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at RIT, (585)292-8989 or email us at [osher.info@rit.edu](mailto:osher.info@rit.edu) and we will put you in touch with our Osher Speakers program coordinator.

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# General Subjects

## **Deaf Culture**

Rochester, New York, has the largest deaf population in the U.S. This talk will help you understand the problems the hearing and deaf encounter with each other. We will talk about Cochlear implants and the electronics which have opened a new world for the deaf; education opportunities, theater, language and other possibilities. Several short videos will be included in this talk.

### **Speakers: Frances and John Ratcliffe**

John was born deaf to hearing parents. He met Frances (hearing) on a blind date for his fraternity dance at RIT in 1953. This began a lifetime of living in two worlds, and as a couple they have bridged the gap, teaching Deaf Culture and sign language to whoever will listen.

## **Geography Matters**

Geography is much more than memorizing the names of continents and reciting facts about South America. To understand the problems faced by our country and the world, you need to be a geographically-aware person. In this talk we will discuss how the physical and the human landscapes impact conflicts around the world.

### **Speaker: Tim McDonnell**

Tim McDonnell, a retired teacher, is a board member of the NY Geographic Alliance and its newsletter editor. He has received awards for his lessons from the National Council of Geographic Educators.

# General Subjects

## **The Carousel**

Carol Samuel's talk will cover the history of the carousel, the anatomy of the carousel and the various styles of carvers. The care and preservation of the animals and other parts of the carousel will also be discussed. Sources of information will be available for more investigation by participants if desired.

**Speaker: Carol Samuel**

Carol Samuel is an obstetrical nurse and prenatal educator, mostly retired. Her occasional childhood enjoyment of merry-go-rounds has developed into an abiding adult interest in antique, wooden carousels following an exhibit of this American art at the Rochester Museum and Science Center in 1988. As a member of the former Friends of the Rochester Carousels and as a current member of the National Carousel Association, Carol takes every opportunity to visit historic carousels locally and during travels around the country.

## **Collections: Windows Into The Past**

Almost everyone has been a collector, and every collection has a history, whether it is personal, cultural, factual, or all of the above. Discovering ways to learn about, preserve, and share this history can add to the joy and value of being a collector.

**Speaker: Florence Smith**

Florence Smith worked for 15 years at Strong Museum in the Education Department. There she developed lessons and programs for both children and adults based on the collections used in museum exhibits.

# History

## **Searching for the Erie Canal(s)**

When New Yorkers, led by DeWitt Clinton, constructed the Erie Canal in the early 19th century, it changed the state and the nation forever. Later on, two revisions of the canal were made - the enlarged Erie Canal and the Barge Canal, still in operation today. We will discuss all three canals and the remarkable "ruins" that we can all visit today from Albany to Buffalo.

**Speaker:** *Tim McDonnell*

Tim McDonnell, a retired teacher, is a board member of the NY Geographic Alliance and its newsletter editor. He has received awards for his lessons from the National Council of Geographic Educators.

## **In Search of the First Americans**

Who might the first humans to move into the Western Hemisphere have been? How long ago might they have arrived? Where might they have come from? How might they have traveled? Where has the oldest evidence of human occupation been found in our hemisphere to date? These questions will be explored during this presentation.

**Speakers:** *Kathy Hayes*

Kathy Hayes is a retired math teacher who joined Osher in order to keep on learning and to make new friends. She has used the lure of leading courses there as an incentive to explore areas of interest such as archeology, Native American history, and The Erie Canal.

# History

## **Kit Carson—Hero or Villain?**

Kit Carson lived in the West from 1809 to 1868. He was a mountain man, a guide to the explorer John C. Fremont, a rancher, a soldier, and a peacemaker. His life personifies this period in the Western United States—a time of Manifest Destiny, the War with Mexico, and the Indian Wars. Why was Kit Carson viewed as a hero for 100 years, then as a villain? What do we think now? This presentation will explore both Kit Carson's life and the times in which he lived.

**Speaker:** *Susan Thomas*

Susan Thomas is a retired finance manager who became interested in Kit Carson in 2007 when she read Hampton Sides' book "Blood and Thunder." She has found that leading a course is an excellent way to learn a new subject and to meet new people.

## **The Real Underground Railroad**

The Real Underground Railroad: Thousands of "Freedom Seekers" left slavery and headed north. Their stories have been either forgotten or turned into myths. In this talk, we will discuss what is really known about this Underground Railroad, with a special emphasis on New York and the Rochester Area.

**Speaker:** *Tim McDonnell*

Tim McDonnell, a retired teacher, is a board member of the NY Geographic Alliance and its newsletter editor. He has received awards for his lessons from the National Council of Geographic Educators.

# Literature & Art

## **Famous Faces and Famous Footwear**

In 1986 I quit my job to see if I could become an artist. I taught myself to create watercolor portraits using three dimensional folded papers for the clothing of authors and artists I admired. I also created sculptured clay shoes women have worn from Thebes to the present 1994, a Vivian Westwood shoe that caused Naomi Campbell to fall on the couture runway. The talk and slides will present and overview of my work as an artist.

**Speaker: Marilyn Gillespie**

Marilyn Gillespie is a self-educated artist. She has exhibited widely in the area and was selected to show in the Finger Lakes Exhibit three times. At the invitation of the Memorial Art Gallery, her 72 unique sculptures of women's shoes throughout the ages were featured for 10 months under the title "Famous Footwear."

## **Great and Small Writings of Salman Rushdie**

Salman Rushdie combines a vivid imagination, broad training in history, and an unusual command of language to produce masterworks of writing. Daan Zwick has enjoyed reading Rushdie's great novels and his many short stories and essays and he especially enjoys sharing this pleasure with others.

**Speaker: Daan Zwick**

After 42 years as a research scientist, Daan Zwick has discovered that there is a life after Kodak, especially at Osher. Volunteering to teach courses in new fields is a wonderful way of experiencing that new life.

# Music

## **The Music of Duke Ellington**

Duke Ellington was without peer in 20th Century American music. He was an original pianist, a composer of beautiful popular songs such as Solitude, a leader of a band that was active for an incredible 50 years, a unique arranger and the composer of extended works for jazz orchestra that expanded the definitions of jazz. This talk will describe and illustrate with recorded examples each of these attributes of this remarkable musician.

**Speaker:** *Peter Luce*

Peter Luce has been a student of jazz history for many years. He discovered jazz while in high school and the music has been a "mild obsession" ever since. His talk is based on research done in preparation for the 18-session course on Duke Ellington that he taught at Osher.

## **Some Early Popular Songs of Bob Dylan**

The 1960's were tumultuous years in many ways. Three quite noticeable areas were politics, civil rights and music, folk music in particular. In the early 1960's, folk had been of minor interest for most. This presentation is the short story, with a good deal of music, about how Bob Dylan, and others, brought folk music into the popular genre.

**Speaker:** *Bill Faul*

Bill Faul, a retired Kodak imaging scientist, trained in chemistry during the '60's but spent the second half of his 32-year Kodak career in digital imaging. He is now a devoted exerciser, a trumpet player, a collector of O-gauge trains and a believer in the adage: "If you want to know more about something, teach it."

# Physical/Mental Activities

## **Fitness: Better Late Than Never**

Turn back the clock. Become motivated to be more physically fit, even if you've been inactive in the past. Understand the four elements of fitness: strength, endurance, body fat composition and flexibility. Learn what you can do at home to achieve a more youthful, healthy body.

**Speaker:** *Elaine Zack*

Elaine Zack is a certified physical fitness and nutritional specialist. She was a behavior education counseling supervisor for the Nutri System Weight Loss Center. She has been a competitive runner and cyclist for the past 30 years (since age 47) and received a 2003 Lifespan Second Half of Life Hero Award. The Monroe County Legislature recently gave her a Certificate of Recognition for her accomplishments.

## **Mental Calisthenics**

Research shows that "brain exercise" keeps you young and improves brain function. This talk, with a little audience participation, will explore a variety of "exercises" including analogies, cryptograms, crossword puzzles and acrostics, emphasizing the specific benefits of each. For adults of all ages.

**Speaker:** *Carole Haas*

Carole Haas became exposed to various puzzles while teaching gifted children in the Penfield School District. She has since become an crossword puzzle addict.

## **The Words We Work and Play With**

The English language, having evolved from at least three major roots over more than a millennium, is probably the hardest to learn and the easiest to use, misuse and play with. By concentrating on its words, Daan Zwick shares the fun inherent in "our" mother tongue.

**Speaker:** *Daan Zwick*

After 42 years as a research scientist, Daan Zwick has discovered that there is a life after Kodak, especially at The Athenaeum. Volunteering to teach courses in new fields is a wonderful way of experiencing that new life.

# Poets & Poetry

## **Billy Collins: American Poet Laureate**

In 2001, the Library of Congress appointed Billy Collins to a two-year term as the United States Poet Laureate. The poetry of Billy Collins has evoked an unprecedented public response. Poetry suddenly became a popular subject. Book sales of his works have broken records and he has had speaking engagements across the country. No poet since Robert Frost has been as popular. Collins' poetry has been described as both humorous and serious reflections on the feelings, needs, and experiences of everyday people. His poems are readily understood by everyone. The talk will include information about Collins' life and readings from his poetry, as well as audio recordings of Billy Collins reading from his own works.

**Speaker: Roselle Fine**

Roselle Fine is a retired psychotherapist who worked with people having marital, family, or sexual problems. During the past ten years, she has been teaching classes about the lives and poems of Laureate Poets such as Billy Collins and Robert Frost.

## **Poetic Visions**

Many people are discovering or rediscovering poetry. It is short, pointed and relevant. Whether you learn to write it, or read and enjoy it, poetry has much to offer, especially today when it is experiencing a nationwide resurgence. In a lively and interesting presentation, Dr. Lehmann will read from his own work and those of other Osher students to reveal some little-known secrets about well-known modern poets.

**Speaker: Gary Lehmann**

Gary Lehmann holds a PhD. in English Literature from Duke University. For the past 10 years, Dr. Lehmann has been a teacher of poetry and other literature in the School of Liberal Arts at RIT.

# Politics

## **Presidential Leadership**

This talk focuses on the different styles of leadership of American presidents by linking their personal characteristics and political background with challenging issues of their times. The talk will develop a basis for comparing different types of presidential leadership and will emphasize which presidents have been more effective in their decision choices. Examples include Roosevelt and the New Deal; Kennedy and Cuba; Nixon and Watergate; and George H.W. Bush and the Persian Gulf War and George W. Bush and the War in Iraq.

**Speaker: Alan Shank**

Alan Shank is Professor Emeritus of Political Science from SUNY-Geneseo where he taught for 31 years. Alan has written several books on the American presidency. He has taught classes at Osher on American Presidents and Crisis Decisions and the Great Decisions Program of the American Foreign Policy Association.

## **Religion and Politics in the U.S.**

Since the 1970's, the influence of religion on the political scene has become more prominent. This talk will briefly review the history of this involvement, the growth of the power of Evangelical Protestants, and the role religion plays in the 2008 presidential nomination and general election process.

**Speaker: Bob Getz**

Bob Getz is a retired Professor of Political Science, SUNY Brockport, with areas of specialization in the Presidency, Congress and gender politics.

# Science & Technology

## **Connectivity Map**

Medicine stands at a unique moment in history. With complete knowledge of the human genome, scientists can now systematically discover the molecular basis of human disease. In perhaps one of the most ambitious spin-offs of the human genome project, researchers at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, Children's Hospital Boston, the Broad Institute of Harvard and MIT, and other collaborating centers have unveiled a new, systematic approach to drug discovery that matches diseases with potential treatments using a universal language based on cells' distinctive gene activity profiles or "signatures."

**Speaker: Bob Vukosic**

Bob Vukosic is a retired design engineer whose professional career involved the application of cutting edge technologies to the development, design and manufacturing of complex business and professional products.

## **Digital Photography: From Camera to Computer**

The world of photography has experienced a major revolution over the past 15 years with the advent of digital imaging. Learn what is meant by a digital image and what features to consider when buying a digital camera. Observe how digital images make their way onto computers and more importantly, explore the absolute magic and fascination of manipulating the computer images to create all sorts of wondrous effects. This is a hobby for all of us, young or old, beginner or seasoned veteran. Let this talk open the door for you to the wonderful world of digital photography.

**Speaker: Ed Salem**

Ed Salem is Professor Emeritus, retired from the department of Electrical Engineering at RIT. While at RIT, Ed taught courses in signal and image processing. He is currently a member of the Osher where he teaches courses in computers and mathematics.

# Science & Technology

## **Is Your Mastercard Safe on The Internet?**

You have been searching for that special book and finally find it at amazon.com. You purchase it over the internet using your credit card. Is the transaction safe? Are you doomed? Follow us through history from Julius Caesar through the Middle Ages and into the Second World War as we trace the sometimes humorous history of secrecy and cryptography. We will finally come to the internet and describe the clever modern cryptographic methods used to ensure safe electronic transactions.

**Speaker: Ed Salem**

Ed Salem is Professor Emeritus, retired from the department of Electrical Engineering at RIT. While at RIT, Ed taught courses in signal and image processing. He is currently a member of the Osher where he teaches courses in computers and mathematics.

## **It's All in Your Head**

Is it really possible to change the structure and function of the brain, and in so doing alter how we think and feel? The answer is a resounding "Yes". Through the eyes of Wall Street Journal science writer Sharon Begley we will soon see how cutting edge science and the ancient wisdom of Buddhism have come together to show how we all have the power to literally change our brains by changing our minds.

**Speaker: Bob Vukosic**

Bob Vukosic is a retired design engineer whose professional career involved the application of cutting edge technologies to the development, design and manufacturing of complex business and professional products.

# Science & Technology

## **Nanotechnology - A Dream or a Nightmare?**

In nanotechnology, scientists and engineers are learning how to guide individual atoms as they combine to form molecules and, in turn, how to make materials – molecule-by-molecule – that don't exist in nature. Their work cuts across some of the hottest areas of science, including innovative drug-delivery systems, cancer treatments, ultra-strong lightweight metals, and mass-produced superconducting wires – to name a few. On the other hand, how much do we know about the effects of nano structures on humans health and the environment?

**Speaker:** **Bob Vukosic**

Bob Vukosic is a retired design engineer whose professional career involved the application of cutting edge technologies to the development, design and manufacturing of complex business and professional products.

## **The Power to Divide**

This talk covers the basic science of stem cell research. Ethical and regulation issues are also covered as well as political and economic implications. Specifically these facets and issues will be reviewed: What is stem cell research? What distinguishes the different approaches? What are the ethical questions regarding this research? What is the current position of the federal government? Why are states vying for leadership in stem research? What is the potential economic impact? What are the legal restrictions regarding stem cell research?

**Speaker:** **Bob Vukosic**

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