



## 2024 OSHER WINTER LECTURES

We are pleased to offer a selection of lecture topics in January and February. Lectures are free and open to Osher members and non-members alike. Two are scheduled to meet in-person at Edenwald Senior Living in Towson (800 Southerly Road, Towson, MD 21286), and the others will meet via Zoom.

Please register for the lectures you wish to attend by clicking the link below each entry. You will receive Zoom links for any of the online lectures you register to attend.

Topic	Instructor	Date	Time	Register
<b>WINTER LECTURES</b>				
<b>The Restless Genius of Benjamin Franklin</b>	Richard Bell	January 10	1 p.m.	<a href="#"><u>REGISTER HERE</u></a>
<b>White House Memories: The Butler Did It!</b>	Alan DeValerio	January 24	1 p.m.	<a href="#"><u>REGISTER HERE</u></a>
<b>The Great Old Days: A Look at the Godfather Saga</b>	Arnold Blumberg	January 31	1 p.m.	<a href="#"><u>REGISTER HERE</u></a>
<b>Ruth Handler: The Woman Behind Barbie</b>	Barbara Blumberg Ressin	February 14	1 p.m.	<a href="#"><u>REGISTER HERE</u></a>
<b>The Shame of Satire</b>	David Misch	February 28	1 p.m.	<a href="#"><u>REGISTER HERE</u></a>

*Please note that this schedule is subject to change.*

# WINTER LECTURES

## The Restless Genius of Benjamin Franklin

Richard Bell

Wednesday, January 10 | 1:00 p.m. | Edenwald Senior Living

Benjamin Franklin was the epitome of a lifelong learner. Although he had only two years of formal schooling, curiosity coursed through his life from his humble beginnings as the son of candle-makers in Boston to his accomplishments in the fields of science, engineering, and invention. In this presentation, we will examine many of Franklin's ideas to make life simpler, cheaper, and easier. A true innovator, Franklin took pleasure in experimentation, even when things went wrong—which they often did!

*Richard Bell is a scholar, writer, and professor at the University of Maryland. His research focuses on the history and culture of the United States between 1750 and 1877. He is the author of "Stolen: Five Free Boys Kidnapped into Slavery and Their Astonishing Odyssey Home" (Simon & Schuster).*

[REGISTER HERE](#)

## White House Memories: The Butler Did It!

Alan DeValerio

Wednesday, January 24 | 1:00 p.m. | Edenwald Senior Living

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to attend a presidential function at the White House? How about a State Dinner? Have you ever imagined what the family quarters of the White House look like? Former White House butler, Alan DeValerio, will give the inside details about all the preparations involved in White House entertaining and how it has evolved over the years from FDR to the present. He will relate his firsthand experiences with history, and he'll also pass along the stories of those who have been taking care of our First Families ever since the Franklin Roosevelt administration.

*Alan DeValerio is originally from Rhode Island. He moved to the DC area out of an interest in writing political humor but ended up working at the White House as a butler from 1980 to 1990. He is now retired and travels around the east coast doing presentations about his White House experiences.*

[REGISTER HERE](#)



## **The Great Old Days: A Look at the Godfather Saga**

Arnold Blumberg

Wednesday, January 31 | 1:00 p.m. | online via Zoom

There are few movies as universally accepted as a perfect, undisputed masterpieces in the history of film as “The Godfather” (1972), and its sequel, “The Godfather Part II” (1974). Together they represent a landmark in American cinematic storytelling that is unmatched in its emotional impact and longevity. Even though the third film, “The Godfather Part III” (1990), did not achieve the same level of respect and praise as its predecessors, it provides an almost indispensable coda to the saga of the Corleone family, which is ultimately the story of the phantasm that is the American dream. This lecture will look at the history of “The Godfather” series and the many ways in which it has permanently impacted our shared cultural experience.

*Arnold Blumberg is a pop culture historian and professor of multiple courses in media history and other cultural topics. He has taught at UMBC, the University of Baltimore, CCBC, and Osher at Towson University. He spent 15 years in the comic book industry as writer and editor of “The Overstreet Comic Book Price Guide,” curated a pop culture museum for five years, and currently runs his own publishing company, ATB Publishing.*

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## **Ruth Handler: The Woman Behind Barbie**

Barbara Blumberg Ressin

Wednesday, February 14 | 1:00 p.m. | online via Zoom

The smash success of “Barbie”, the movie, introduced many people to Ruth Handler, the woman who created the iconic doll. Handler created the Barbie doll in response to seeing her own daughter, also named Barbie, dressing up paper dolls and imagining them in real life situations. Handler’s life was fascinating on both personal and professional levels. From her unusual childhood to creating the phenomenon of Barbie, Handler persisted through professional struggles, personal tragedy, and illness. She is now being recognized for her smashing through the glass ceiling before that term even existed.

*Barbara Blumberg Ressin taught at the Beth Tfiloh Community Day School for 25 years. In retirement, Barbara taught as an adjunct professor at Florida Gulf State University and at the Community College of Baltimore County. She has taught many courses for Osher at Towson University.*

**[REGISTER HERE](#)**

## The Shame of Satire

David Misch

Wednesday, February 28 | 1:00 p.m. | online via Zoom

Comedy has been mocking society's foibles since the poets of ancient Rome, but right now may be the Golden Age of Satire with "The Daily Show", Samantha Bee, Bill Maher, John Oliver, Stephen Colbert, and "The Onion" shaming the shameless by taking pungent, potent pokes at the hypocrisies of society. But does shaming have any effect? Even many satirists don't think so, yet pushback has been harsh, from the "Charlie Hebdo" massacre in Paris to repression of satirists worldwide, from imprisonment of Chinese bloggers to a comedian standing trial in Germany. Satirists are always being accused of being offensive, but generally, they don't care. George Carlin said, "it's the duty of a comedian to find out where the line is...then step over it." One thing is certain: that line is different for everyone. So, how do we decide when satire goes too far? This talk explores how satire challenges society's taboos by getting people to examine their assumptions. Ultimately, satire is less about changing minds than getting people to think.

*David Misch is a former stand-up comedian, writer, and teacher. As a screenwriter, his credits include "Mork and Mindy", "Saturday Night Live", "The Muppets Take Manhattan". He is the author of "Funny: The Book: A Beginner's Guide to Corruption". He has taught comedy courses at University of Southern California and musical satire at UCLA. He's given lectures at Yale, Columbia, the Smithsonian, 92nd St.Y, Oxford University, Trinity College Dublin, University of Sydney, VIEW Cinema (Torino, Italy), San Miguel (Mexico) Writers' Conferences, Raindance Film Festival (London), Austin Film Festival, American Film Institute, Writers Guild of America, Sony, DreamWorks, Lucasfilm, Disney, Second City, and the Actors Studio.*

### **REGISTER HERE**

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