



THE NEWS

MARCH 2025

Dear OLLI Members and Friends,

Variety continues to be the hallmark of OLLI at Ringling College. Our spring term offerings include more than 15 single-session classes and lectures as well as an assortment of multi-session classes. We're sure you'll find something that fits your schedule.

Spring term classes begin on March 17, and there is still time for you to register. If you're unsure which classes to take, please visit our website to review the catalog. We encourage everyone to enroll in at least one class or lecture to help us match the successful registration of our winter term.

Why lifelong learning?

According to the Institute on Aging, learning something new can have a huge effect on your physical, mental, and emotional health.

Keeping the brain active can:

- [Prevent the onset of dementia](#)
- Sharpen alertness
- Stimulate new neural connections

- Promote human connection
- [Improve memory](#) function and cognition

No matter how you look at it, learning enriches our lives, expands our minds, and keeps us mentally fit and agile. As Henry Ford once said, *“Anyone who stops learning is old, whether 20 or 80. Anyone who keeps learning stays young.”*

We invite you to join us and stay connected for the pure joy of learning!

See you on campus,

The OLLI Newsletter Staff

New Volunteer Coordinator Named



OLLI welcomes **Debra Ashby** as the new Volunteer Coordinator. Debra's first day was Monday, March 10.

There will be a reception later this month to introduce her to the OLLI community. In the meantime, drop by the main office and introduce yourself. Find out more about Debra in the April newsletter.

Welcome aboard!

Kudos for a Successful Spring Preview

The Spring preview was held on Feb. 20 in McGuire Hall. Guest presenters included new and returning instructors who expertly shared information about their courses. Thanks to **John Scibak, Hollis Weisman, Roxanne Baker, Chris Angermann, Ron**

Hammerle, Beverly Jennings, William Simpson, Gail Sussman-Miller, and Jeffrey Sherman.

Colleen Lundwall, Chair of the OLLI Curriculum Committee, and **Sheila Reed**, Assistant Director, did a wonderful job planning the preview.



Spotlight on Instructors... Star Newman: Magician and Mentalist

By Anne Perry Moore

Anne Perry Moore shared how lucky OLLI at Ringling College is to have Star Newman as a magician and mentalist in our midst. (Please don't link this! I love her answers.)

Star will be back on April 23 as a participant in **The Grand Experience**, a collaboration between Sarasota Art Museum and OLLI. This special activity, open to all grandparents,



kids, and parents, will include storytelling, music, and magic! This is a not-to-be-missed arts experience.

What do you enjoy most about OLLI students and performing at OLLI?

The short answer is that the students at OLLI are essentially who I want to be (when I grow up). I am endlessly curious, and OLLI nurtures students who are hungry for knowledge about the world around them. It's somewhat like a Malcolm Gladwell book—it shows that even things that might seem mundane, or that you might not yet have an interest in, can end up being truly fascinating. I enjoy sharing new insights with well-rounded people who can look beyond initial assumptions of what something is.

Who inspired your interest in magic? What did they do or say that compelled you to become "magical"?

I had a crush on a young magician and family friend. I told my grandpa I wanted to be a magician to meet him. I had been involved in theater for years, but my love for magic quickly surpassed it, offering me an art form where I didn't need to audition. With magic, I could create acts themed around anything I was passionate about, like movie characters or Rorschach tests. Today, it still serves as a way to spark conversations, connect with others as well as highlight the things I want to inspire people to notice or ponder. (We dated for about a week a few years later.)

Why is magic important for people to experience?

Experiencing magic can be a fantastic vacation from reality. Much like a good book or movie, it provides a stress-relieving break for your mind. It's also healthy to wonder about something where the consequence of not knowing the answer won't end the world. Seeing something impossible helps us mentally shift our perception of what we thought was

possible. By adopting a mindset that questions established certainties, we may be inspired to carry that way of thinking beyond a magic show.

What do you want to conjure in 2025?

After spending so much time designing performances that are meaningful and relevant to my audience, I would like to deepen their amazement by remembering to highlight the impossibility of the miracles. This not only fulfills the expectations of a magician/mentalists but also delivers that essential sense of wonder. In terms of performance, I would like to travel more for magic, send an audition video to perform at The Magic Castle in Hollywood, and team up with a venue to present a small (30-person) regularly scheduled ticketed Magic and Mentalism show.



Listening to Women: another smash hit

Listening to Women 2025, our highly acclaimed Winter series, has concluded another outstanding year. **Holly Freedman** and her dedicated committee have consistently

delivered quality programming that highlights local women who have made significant contributions in the fields of arts, industry, government, civil rights, and education.

We look forward to what 2026 brings.

A Centennial Celebration



To celebrate the 100th anniversary of *The New Yorker Magazine*, Alan Freedman treated the class to custom-made cupcakes. *The New Yorker Magazine: Conversations* class is one of the most popular courses at OLLI. Alan selects articles from the most recent issue, and the conversations begin from there. Thanks, Alan!

Shared Interest Groups (SIG) Update

The Mah Jongg class, with **Michelle Chaplin**, and the Canasta class with **Donna Miller-Small**, were so successful that they were the catalysts for two new SIGs. Each SIG welcomes all levels of players.

Joan Caruso is the contact for Mah Jongg at joancarusoconsulting@gmail.com. You are asked to provide your own game card.

Marty Betagole is the contact for Canasta at thatgirl830@gmail.com.

The [Joyful Women in Transition SIG with facilitator: Gail Sussman-Miller](#) continues to be a success. For more information about this SIG contact Gail at: gail@inspiredchoice.com.

SIGs are a great way to find people with similar interests. To sponsor a SIG, please fill out the form [here](#).

New Instructors Always Wanted

Have you ever been curious about a topic? Do you know someone who would be a good instructor for OLLI? We welcome prospective instructors who have a passion for a topic, as well as those who have spent a lifetime pursuing a field that would be wonderful to share.

Tobie van der Vorm chairs the Instructor Recruitment Committee and welcomes all inquiries. If you are interested or have questions or suggestions, please email her at tobievdv@gmail.com

The deadline for fall course proposals is May 15.

Support Your OLLI

Each contribution is an investment in yourself, your friends, and the future of lifelong learning in Sarasota and Manatee counties. Consider giving a Qualified Charitable Distribution from your annual Required Minimum Distribution each year.

OLLI appreciates your generosity at any level.

[Donate to OLLI](#)

The OLLI newsletter staff: Marion Richter (editor), Gary Reinmuth, Anne Perry Moore, Tom Miller, and Meghan Burrows (OLLI staff).

Stay connected with our updates and share yours. Email: **marionr44@gmail.com**



OLLI is located at the Ringling College
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