

THE NEWS

April - May 2026



Florida native and *New York Times* bestselling author Carl Hiaasen at OLLI Talks, our inaugural fundraiser, on March 27.

Dear OLLI Members and Friends,

As we wrap up another school year, we are feeling incredibly grateful. Enrollment and membership were both up, so was the number of our special events and programs.

A highlight of the year was the launch of our OLLI Talks series on March 27, featuring Carl Hiaasen, a *New York Times* bestselling author. More than 200 guests attended the event as Hiaasen shared entertaining stories about his books and his many unforgettable characters. There was laughter throughout the afternoon as Hiaasen showed us he is a master at storytelling and writing.

Mingling Makes Strong Connections

The OLLI Mingles have been a great success. Thanks to Marilyn Pinsky's leadership, members have enjoyed casual gatherings with coffee, cookies, and conversation. If you missed any of the Mingles this past year, we hope you'll join the fun in the coming academic year.

An article in the Mayo Clinic Press highlights something many of us already know: strong social connections are one of the most important keys to longevity.

Click [here](#) to read the article for other tips on healthy aging.

A great example of the importance of social connections is our very own Albert "Al" Cohen. Al is a beloved and extraordinary instructor who just happens to be a nonagenarian. For over 15 years, Al has shared his love of classical music with hundreds of OLLI members. In our first audio interview, Tom Miller sits down with Al to talk about his life, music, and what keeps him going.

Bridget Olson, a recent retiree, talks about her journey to OLLI in a conversation with Judy LaMée.

A Fond Farewell and an Open Invitation

Dr. Larry R. Thompson has been a champion and enthusiastic supporter of OLLI since we joined the college in 2017.

In recognition of his commitment, Dr. Phyllis C. Brown presented him with a lifetime OLLI membership—along with an open invitation to return as both a student and an instructor.

The OLLI doors are open, Dr. Thompson!

Marion Richter, Editor



Members at a recent Mingle from left: Millie Finkel, Peter Mermin, and Bob Litwak.



What I Love About OLLI,

By Judy LaMée

Judy interviewed Bridget Olson, whose discovery of OLLI shows the importance of lifelong learning.

Judy: How did you become an OLLI member?

Bridget Olson

Bridget: Like so many before me, when I retired in late 2024, I spent the first year figuring out what I wanted this next chapter to look like. In October 2025, I went on a Road Scholar trip and realized how much I enjoyed learning about people and places. When I returned, I wanted to recreate that experience on an ongoing basis. In a light bulb moment, I remembered hearing about a lifelong learning program in Sarasota. I started Googling and bam, found OLLI, realizing that was the program. I immediately signed up for a membership and took my first classes this winter, and am now hooked for life!

Judy: What do you love about OLLI?

Bridget: I love OLLI because the number, scope, and variety of courses offered allow me to explore new topics in a setting that encourages interactive discussion and dialogue in a way that is simply not available anywhere else. The program is exceptionally well organized by a staff that strives to meet and exceed the needs and interests of its members and students. I highly recommend the quarterly Previews, where you not only get to meet instructors and interact with fellow students, but also discover a course or two you might not have otherwise considered. And the freshly baked cookies from the Bistro are a bonus treat!

OLLI's Summer of Fun

Join us in celebrating OLLI Summer Adventures 2026. Choose from more than 30 events, programs, presentations, and tours. What's great about our summer curriculum is that all courses are single sessions. Got a couple of hours between a doctor's appointment or before you meet the gang for lunch? We've got a class for you.

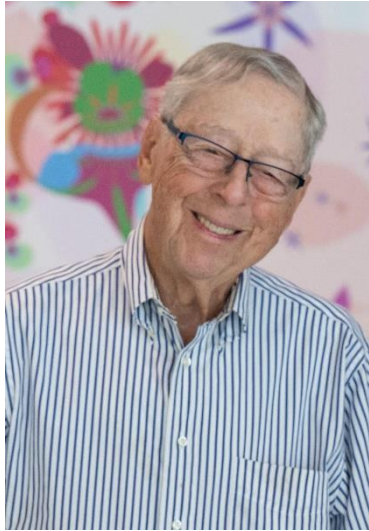
The Summer term runs May 18 - July 10.

Registration opens 8 am Tuesday, May 5, for all OLLI Members (Gold and Silver) and to the public.

Check out these course highlights:

- Using AI on Your Smartphone
- Rumination... When Your Mind Won't Let Go
- Gardens That Give Back: Designing for Pollinators in Florida
- Genius Women Erased from History
- Wellness Trends 2026: Good, Bad, and Questionable
- Mission Green: The Importance of Both Local and Global Forests
- Taxes in Retirement: What You Don't Know Can Cost You
- Jewelry Making: Design Your Own Necklace
- The Best Mel Brooks Film

NoName Repertory Theatre presents *The Lady Larkspur Lotion*, a Tennessee Williams one-act dark comedy. Special guest St. David Fowler sets the mood with a live performance of New Orleans blues and jazz.



Spotlight on Al Cohen: OLLI's Musical Marvel, Extraordinaire

Tom Miller, a veteran of Albert "Al" Cohen's music courses, interviewed him after class. You can listen to Al's interview or read the transcribed interview. There is a lot to learn about his gifts.

[Listen to the interview on YouTube](#)

[Read the interview transcript](#)

Your Next Chapter: Teaching at OLLI

OLLI at Ringling College is seeking new instructors to join our vibrant lifelong learning community. Our instructors play a crucial role in helping shape and enrich our course curriculum.

You might be a great fit if you have a subject or area of expertise that you are passionate about, or value staying mentally active while learning and engaging with others. Formal teaching credentials are not required to teach at OLLI.

Share Your Passion

Visit www.OLLIRinglingcollege.org to view past issues of our catalogs for ideas and inspiration. When you're ready, email: OLLI@ringling.edu. In the subject line, add: OLLI Teach OR call the office at 941-309-5111 for information.

Positive Impacts

Volunteers help keep our program humming. From the greeters and outreach teams to the office volunteers and members of the Advisory Council—there are many people behind the scenes, especially the OLLI staff—working diligently to bring quality programming to our community of lifelong learners. We thank everyone!

Support Your OLLI

Your contribution, at any level, demonstrates your commitment to OLLI at Ringling College. All gifts are tax-deductible and go directly to OLLI. You can make an annual gift by setting up a monthly, quarterly, or yearly recurring donation. You can even make a donation when you register for classes.

[Donate to OLLI](#)

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



OLLI is located at the Ringling College
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