



THE NEWS

June - July 2026



OLLI members on the *Sea Life Encounter Cruise*, June 2, 2026.

Dear OLLI Members and Friends,

OLLI welcomes Dr. Davis Schneiderman, the new President of Ringling College of Art and Design. In the coming months, we look forward to Dr. Schneiderman getting to know more about OLLI, our members, and programs.

OLLI Summer Adventures 2026 is winding down. The potpourri of courses — from finding your singing voice to using AI on your smartphone to celebrating the history of musical theater, to learning about genius women erased from history — have been fun and engaging.

Whatever adventures or activities, you choose to do for the remainder of the summer, don't forget to spend time outdoors. Walking has long-been known as a panacea for better health. Florence Williams, in "The Nature Fix," shared how her studies in environmental psychology led to an understanding of the restorative benefits of nature.

Williams said 90-minute walks in nature "decrease neural activity in the subgenual prefrontal cortex, the specific brain region associated with depression, anxiety, and negative self-talk."

Check out [this link here](#) for more.

Even looking outside or taking a short walk can be beneficial.

Stay well! Stay hydrated!

Marion Richter, Newsletter Editor



Expanding Lifelong Learning Through the Osher Online Program

OLLI at Ringling is part of a national network of more than 120 Osher Lifelong Learning Institutes. Through this network, we receive educational resources from the Osher National Resource Center (NRC) at Northwestern University's School of Professional Studies. The NRC serves as a center of excellence dedicated to helping OLLI programs across the country grow and thrive.

Recently, the NRC introduced the Osher Online Program (OOL). In the spring, members of our Advisory Committee met with NRC representatives to learn more about the program. We came away impressed by both its quality and its potential benefits for our members.

The opportunity to learn from renowned instructors and subject-matter experts from across the country was especially appealing. We also recognized the value of offering our members an opportunity to hear diverse perspectives and ideas beyond our local community.

The benefits of OOL extend beyond the quality of instruction. Class capacities are larger, and because participants enroll from OLLIs nationwide, courses are less likely to be cancelled due to low enrollment.

It is important to note that OOL is not intended to replace or compete with the outstanding courses offered by our local instructors. Instead, OOL enhances our curriculum by providing additional learning opportunities for members who prefer the convenience of online learning or who cannot regularly attend in-person classes.

Starting in fall 2026, we will offer four OOL courses. Each course will meet on Zoom for 90 minutes per week over six weeks. Members will register for these online classes the same way they register for all OLLI at Ringling programs.

Preparations for our fall catalog are underway. We invite you to stay curious and explore these exciting new learning opportunities.

Dr. Phyllis C. Brown

Director, OLLI at Ringling College



It's Been a Very Good Year

Dear OLLI Members,

As we wrap up our summer term and look ahead to 2026-2027, we can truly celebrate many of this year's accomplishments.

- We had record-setting enrollment and attendance in fall, winter, and spring semesters. Record breaking attendance: In 2025-2026 OLLI members visited took an OLLI class or lecture 17, 575 times.

- Membership is near an all-time high 1,167 is an 11% increase from last year. We launched OLLI Talks, our inaugural fundraiser. The sold-out program featured New York Times best-selling author Carl Hiaasen.
- We initiated a series of “OLLI Mingles” to promote community among our members.
- We recruited 57 new instructors of those recruited 51 taught for OLLI.
- The Advisory Committee has developed a new three-year Strategic Plan that provides a blueprint for growth and improvements for the future of OLLI. More about this in the fall.
- Our newsletter continues to showcase our accomplishments, including interesting interviews, as well as providing information and enjoyment to our students.

So, thank you OLLI community.

We look forward to more successes!

Jeff Ryder, Chair

OLLI Ringling College Advisory Committee



Spotlight on Mike Gibson: an Optimist, Troublemaker, and an OLLI Instructor

by Judy LaMée

To say that Mike Gibson is the definition of a “lifelong learner” is an understatement.

OLLI members who have taken Mike’s classes come away with a great appreciation for his world view. That view is well earned, because Mike has lived in five different countries. He studied French art and history at the University of Strasbourg and worked in England as a private contractor for Lockheed Martin.

He has lived in China and Japan. He describes himself as an academic, a student of history, and a linguist. He had a 30-year career working at the National Security Council, traveling broadly throughout those years. He was also an adjunct professor of history at American University and George Washington University, both in Washington, D.C. He even wrote for the “Congressional Quarterly.”

When asked how his career has shaped his current view of the world, Mike described himself as an optimist, a “glass is half full” guy, a hawk, socially a liberal, and, with a twinkle in his eye, added, “I’m a troublemaker.” It’s easy to see that he’s quite proud of that descriptor.

Although Mike expected to spend his retirement in Hawaii, he realized after a short time there that it was culturally too restrictive for him. He returned to the mainland and, following his family members, moved to Sarasota in 2013. He couldn’t be more pleased with his choice of a retirement location.

After taking a course at OLLI, he fell in love with the experience. Teaching at OLLI is also a delight for him because students in his class are interesting and intelligent. Often, he finds himself doing homework after a student presents a perspective he hadn’t considered, which drives him to learn more. He will then share his findings in the next week’s class.

At OLLI, he teaches a variety of courses, including U.S. foreign policy, U.S. military, U.S.-Chinese relations, Chinese history, and Japanese history.

Mike and his wife Chongrim share a passion for ballroom dancing and actually met on the dance floor. The couple enjoys Sarasota’s theatre scene, specifically Asolo Theatre and the Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe.

Duplicate bridge and biking are two pastimes Mike is also enthusiastic about, commenting that Sarasota is a hotbed of bridge aficionados. Mike says he’s also considering teaching classes on cruise ships.

We can easily speculate that this man never sleeps. There just isn’t time.

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.

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.



If you haven't seen *Something Borrowed, Something New*, don't miss it. From paintings, prints, and photography to ceramic, bronze, and glass sculpture, *Something Borrowed, Something New* showcases a diverse range of artworks produced by some of the most prominent artists of our time.

Check out the other wonderful exhibitions: *Beautiful Ideas: The Prints of Sol LeWitt* and Maria A. Guzmán Capron: *New Works*.

Information is available on the website at: <https://www.sarasotaartmuseum.org/exhibitions/>

A variety of events are available throughout the summer. <https://www.sarasotaartmuseum.org/curent-season/>

Shared Interest Groups (SIGs)

The **Canasta** and **Mah Jongg** SIGs will meet throughout the summer.

Contact: thatgirl830@gmail.com for Canasta

Contact: joancarusoconsulting@gmail.com for Mah Jongg.

Participants must be current OLLI members.

We now have a SIG for **World in Transition**, based on the popular OLLI class. Email Pamela Gordon at gordon.pam7@gmail.com if you would like to be in touch with the coordinators of this SIG.

Dine Around Sarasota

Sarasota's dining scene is as diverse as it is delicious — from cozy cafés and neighborhood pubs to waterfront grills, tiki bars, and fine dining favorites. What better way to explore it than with fellow OLLI members?

Talks are underway to launch an OLLI Diners Shared Interest Group, bringing members together for lunch, dinner, conversation, and new connections.

Stay tuned for details!

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 also 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



OLLI is located at the Ringling College
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