



# FEBRUARY 2023

## Andrea Majewski, OLLI-W Program Coordinator Retiring

Fred Hosier

After eight years, Andrea Majewski has retired as UD OLLI Wilmington Program Coordinator. Her last day was Jan. 27, 2023.

Andrea started with UD OLLI on Dec. 1, 2014. Her parents had been taking UD OLLI courses, and their enthusiasm led her to apply. "My dad was fired up. There was a topic in a class he was going on about. When I saw this, I knew what a great place it is. It sounded like a perfect place for me," Andrea said.

She says the people are the No. 1 thing she's going to miss, including "being around so much positive energy."

The biggest challenge Andrea met was transitioning the program when COVID hit. After having a multi-cultural event in March 2020, "two days later, we were shut down [telling people] 'don't come in tomorrow,'" Andrea said. "Then we told people, 'come into the office and get your stuff, we don't know when we're coming back.'"

But UD OLLI came roaring back. Between March and September 2020, close to 200 instructors learned how to Zoom.

"They turned their passion [for learning] into learning Zoom," Andrea said.

The pandemic also unified the three separate programs in Wilmington, Dover and Lewes.

"One of the biggest strengths we took away was uniting into a statewide program. Wilmington members got to know some great instructors."

Andrea says when OLLI returned in fall 2020, it helped participants get through the pandemic.

"With all the isolation people were feeling, this was a connection," Andrea said. "It got people to have rhythm to their days."

Engagement is key to how Andrea describes UD OLLI to people who aren't familiar with it.

"Recently, I was with a group of people I didn't know. I said I worked for UD OLLI which is college for people 50 and older. It's a way to stay active and engaged and satisfy your intellectual curiosity, because that never stops."

Another popular addition besides online learning during Andrea's tenure is the popcorn machine in the lobby. Before the pandemic, when films were shown on Fridays, Andrea said she and her "partner in crime," AV tech Tim Ward, thought, "wouldn't it be great if we had a popcorn machine for the movie days?"

Andrea says the first day they made popcorn again, after returning to in-person learning, was a sign that things were getting back to normal.

Spending time with her family, including two grandchildren, and learning to play pickleball are two of Andrea's plans for retirement.

She says it's been a privilege to work at UD OLLI, and she's come away from the experience a better person.

*See puzzle about Andrea's qualities as program manager on page 3 and pictures on page 6.*

### Inside

Gratitude for the New Year ..... p. 2  
 Staying Stimulated (Coffee at Arsht)..... p. 3  
 OLLI Opinion Surveys ..... pp. 3, 4

Spotlight on Volunteers ..... p. 5  
 Community Outreach, Schedules..... p. 7

## Gratitude in the New Year

Jennifer Merrill, Director, OLLI-W and Online

As our spring semester launches, there is an energy in the air at Arsht Hall! Our open house was full of energy, joy, music and new members ready to join us this spring. I have plenty of gratitude to share for the:

- Leadership of Gerri Sanchez and Glenn Rill as we continue to extend our programs to new locations and communities
- Tireless efforts of Marty Cohen and Pete Harrigan leading our OLLI marketing efforts across the state
- OLLI member-advocates who encouraged friends and neighbors to join us this spring
- Work of volunteers Sherry Rogers and Jean Youkers who coordinated another stellar open house
- Smooth operation of the registration system this spring with the expertise of Jenna Cole and the energy of Colleen Olexa now at the helm
- Volunteers who donated their time and energy to assist other members with registration at Arsht Hall
- Persistence of Pam Vari who ensured that the sink faucets in Arsht Hall no longer douse us as we wash our hands
- UD capital project management team and contractors who recently completed the new parking lot systems, allowing for convenient access to Arsht Hall

- OLLI instructors who offered January Explorations sessions to more than 1,700 attendees
- Volunteers who have allowed us to expand our hybrid and online courses by volunteering to learn and operate technical equipment in Arsht Hall or online
- UD Development and Alumni Relations team for expanding our communication with donors who are so critical to our operations
- Steady hand of Tim Ward who is always ready to assist our instructors and musicians with their plans and equipment
- And so many more who have made additions and given their time and talents to keep OLLI vibrant.

We are now off and running for the year. OLLI is a cooperative in every sense of the word. I hope that if you are new to OLLI, you enjoy your classes, meet new friends, and then contribute to our community in whatever capacity suits you. Consider volunteering for a committee (email [LLL-Council@udel.edu](mailto:LLL-Council@udel.edu) to get started), contributing to one of our upcoming socials, or making a contribution to help us keep our registration fees low.

### Staying Stimulated

Bob Blazovic, member of OLLI Wilmington, also volunteers at the Ronald McDonald House. McDonald's™ donates K-cup pods to the House, in volumes that the House cannot consume. Bob secured K-cup donations from the Ronald McDonald House for OLLI, sufficient to keep OLLI caffeinated all semester long. Gathering for coffee also provides opportunities for stimulating social interactions. Thank you, Bob!



## OLLI National Resource Center Survey

The National Resource Center on behalf of The Bernard Osher Foundation conducted an online survey of statewide OLLI members in the fall of 2022. 92% of 1,026 members responding to the survey said they would refer a friend or a family member! What an outstanding endorsement!

Data from our fall 2022 members indicated:

- A plurality 45% of participants in the OLLI-UD program prefer in-person for the majority of their classes
- Nearly one-third of respondents prefer online classes. The major reasons given are schedule flexibility and transportation concerns.
- More than 20% said they appreciate the hybrid classes that allow for in-person or online participation.
- Major reasons for attending OLLI are “continued intellectual stimulation” (93% agree or strongly agree) and “enhancement of my creative pursuits” (67%).
- The most popular subject areas of interest are history, fine arts including music, and current affairs.

OLLI is responding to this member data with more than 45 courses offered in a “hybrid” format

in the spring. The hybrid format allows you to participate in person or remotely depending on your needs on a particular day. You can find detailed descriptions of all spring courses in our online catalog.

We were pleased to see that 84% of respondents believe the single fee for unlimited courses provides reasonable, high or very high value, and we are delighted to announce that membership fees will remain at \$250 for the spring semester. Where else can you take weekly yoga, watercolor, history and French classes for one fee? Financial assistance is available to anyone challenged by the fee; simply email [olli-online@udel.edu](mailto:olli-online@udel.edu).

Our OLLI program is seeking to increase our membership. Our online programming expands our reach to members who have relocated, share a history or family connection to you—our current members—and allows for participation remotely if personal mobility or caregiving duties prevent joining us on site. Please consider sharing your love of OLLI with your friends and family!

### Program Coordinator Position

The search is on for a program coordinator. The puzzle gives some of the qualities that Andrea brought to the position.

Answers to the puzzle start with the first letter(s) of the clues.

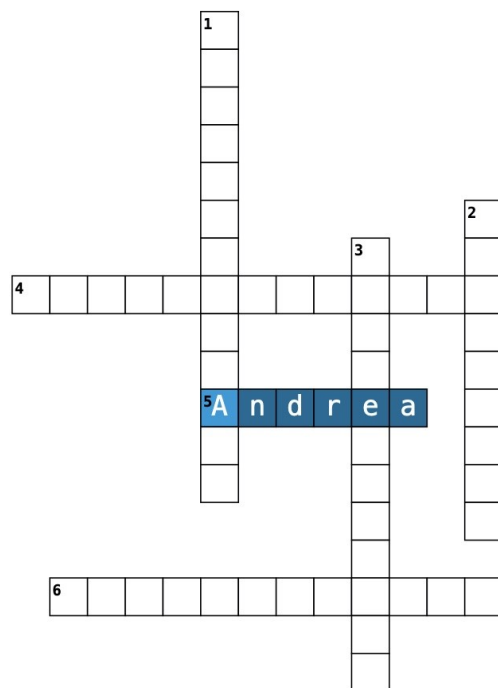
**Down**

1. Connecting with OLLI members (centered on a tropical fruit).
2. Devoted to the OLLI program
3. Proficient and well-trained for the job.

**Across**

4. Water source (4) - in the know about what is happening at OLLI (8)
6. Eliciting applause for performing in the Arsht Lobby or on Broadway

Solution on page 6



## An OLLI Class Opinion Survey

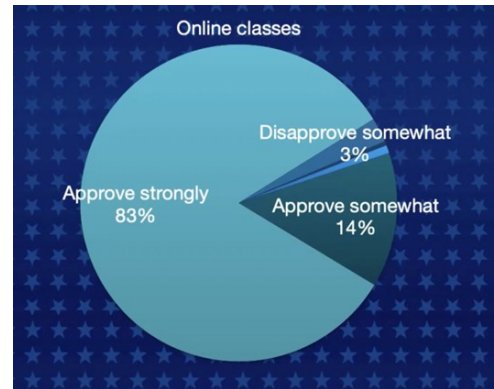
In the “Media and Public Opinion in the 2022 Election” class, Ralph Begleiter surveyed the two sections of the class on political questions, use of the media and opinions about OLLI. Respondents had five days to answer the online questions. Class members were also invited to include their friends and family in the survey.

The survey results from Ralph's poll represent the opinions of class members, and may not represent those of OLLI members in general, or the larger population. The class was delivered in hybrid mode with in-person classes in Selbyville and Lewes. More than half of class members (60% from New Castle County or Pennsylvania) attended via Zoom.

### The survey asked the following questions:

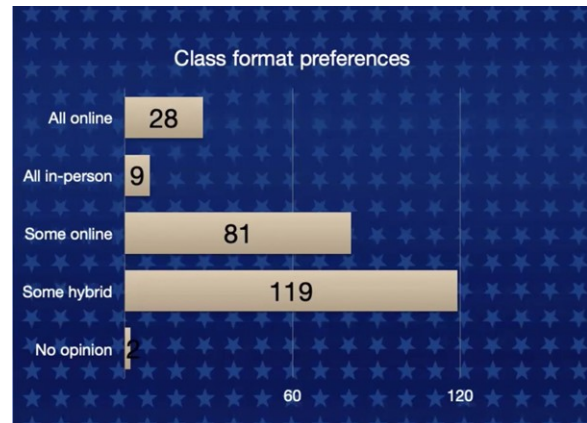
#### How do you feel about online classes?

Even though online classes only started with the pandemic, online classes are approved by 97% of survey respondents.



#### What delivery format(s) do you prefer?

More than 80% wanted some classes to be either online or hybrid.



#### How should OLLI in Delaware be organized?

While many had no opinion, a majority wanted a statewide organization. Only a small number of Kent/Sussex members would like to return to separate Kent and Sussex entities.





## Volunteer Spotlight

Jean Youkers

Tai Chi for Beginners introduces basic stances and postures of this traditional Chinese slow-motion exercise. Instructor Betty Ann Themal says it takes commitment, with practice at home as well as in class. She's been practicing what she preaches for decades. In contrast to the stretches and poses of yoga, she explains that Tai Chi features "smooth, soft, slow, continuous motion." Watching Betty Ann and co-instructor Teddi Collins as they stand on one foot, their graceful motions flowing easily, it is hard to believe the two are 94 and 84, respectively. Meet OLLI-W's talented and devoted Tai Chi instructors.

Betty Ann Themal is a retired registered medical technologist. A native Delawarean, she earned an associate degree in science at Lasell Junior College and worked in several Delaware hospitals. A former Girl Scout leader and trainer, Betty Ann also served as secretary of the Ardentown Trustees for 27 years. She'd enjoyed knitting for a long time but was excited to learn new techniques in OLLI-W knitting classes. Betty Ann and husband, Harry, also an OLLI-W member, have two daughters. Betty Ann's study of Tai Chi began at the YWCA in 1978. In 1998, she began classes at OLLI-W and soon became an assistant instructor, then an instructor. Despite two knee replacements, Betty Ann demonstrates amazing balance as she goes through Tai Chi movements. She feels that practicing Tai Chi over the years helped her to heal more easily from surgery, although Teddi claims that Betty Ann is bionic.



Betty Ann Themal



Teddi Collins



Teddi Collins & Betty Ann Themal

Teddi Collins began taking Tai Chi classes at OLLI-W in 2002—her teacher was Betty Ann. Teddi is also a Delaware native, who worked in local hospitals as a nurse over the years, including 13 years of training nurses at the Nursing School of Wilmington. But Teddi's and Betty Ann's paths didn't cross until Teddi arrived at OLLI-W. She began helping in the class and soon became co-instructor with Betty Ann. Teddi earned her B.S. at West Chester University. Her interest in the theatre led to 31 years of singing and dancing in performances with the Brandywiners, Ltd at Longwood Gardens Theatre. Other interests include painting, photography, and

pets. OLLI-W "gives you the opportunity to learn things you always were interested in but didn't have time for," Teddi says. She's taken courses in Chinese and currently enjoys exploring various art classes and singing in the OLLI-W chorus.

Asked what they most enjoy about volunteering at OLLI-W, both Betty Ann and Teddi enthusiastically said it's the people. They emphasize the importance of balance as we get older, with more and more doctors recommending Tai Chi to help with it. Betty Ann and Teddi previously developed a seated Tai Chi class for individuals who have difficulty standing. Teddi and Betty Ann are committed to sharing Tai Chi with their OLLI-W friends and their efforts are appreciated. Thank you, Teddi and Betty Ann!



## OLLI's New Community Outreach

OLLI's Marketing Committee is leading a new initiative with two objectives. The Speakers' Bureau's first goal is to increase community awareness of OLLI and our membership. The second is to share an hour-long, adult educational program with New Castle County library communities each month. The timing for this effort could not have been better as New Castle County Libraries are re-opening and looking to draw their constituents back into the library.

In January, Tom Powderly with "Curtain Up – Broadway" and Bob Ehrlich, "African Empires and the Sahara," presented at Hockessin Library and now word has spread among library directors that the Speakers' Bureau from OLLI has been formed. Requests are in from Appoquinimink, Hockessin, New Castle Public and Route 9 libraries and the Marketing Committee needs more OLLI volunteers to meet

demands. All topics and music groups are welcome. You can join Bebe Coker, Bob Ehrlich, Annie Gilmour, Eleanor Pollak, Tom Powderly, Hisham Sherif, Ellen Sherin, Becky Worley and Jean Youkers, who are the current Speaker volunteers offering topics such as "Racism – Can We Talk?" "Cardiovascular Health for Women," "Flash Fiction" and "Women Mystery Writers."

The committee is currently looking to schedule programs in March, April and May and your participation would be a fun way to reach an adult library audience and share your passion for OLLI.

For Speakers' Bureau information, please email:

Linda Kellogg [kellogg@udel.edu](mailto:kellogg@udel.edu)

Jean Youkers [jfyoukers@verizon.net](mailto:jfyoukers@verizon.net)

Marty Cohen [martinacohen@aol.com](mailto:martinacohen@aol.com)

### ***OLLI Monthly News in Wilmington***

***<http://www.oli.udel.edu/wilmington/newsletter/>***

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**Issue date:** Monday, April 3

Submit articles to [rehlich@udel.edu](mailto:rehlich@udel.edu).

### **Spring 2023 Schedules**

**OLLI Kent/Sussex – in person at Dover, Lewes and Ocean View locations AND**

February 6 – April 28, 11-week session

February 6 – March 10, 1st 5-week session

April 3 – May 5, 2nd 5-week session

**UD OLLI Online – Zoom only**

**Same schedule as OLLI Kent/Sussex**

**OLLI Wilmington – in person at Arsht Hall**

February 6– May 10, 13-week session

**Spring Break March 27– March 31, no classes**

**UD by the Sea**

May 23– May 25