

## **Spring 2025 OLLI Talk Presentations**

### **12:00–1:00 p.m. (unless otherwise noted)**

**Instructions.** This document contains the list of OLLI Talk presentations scheduled for the Fall 2024 semester. If you are not registering for OLLI Talks using [OLLI's online registration system](#), please email ([ollireg@gmail.com](mailto:ollireg@gmail.com)) or call (617.287.7312) the OLLI office with your OLLI Talk choices. When emailing or leaving a voicemail, please include the title of the OLLI Talk, the date of the presentation, and the location where you will be viewing the presentation. For your convenience, the last page of this document contains a list of OLLI Talk Titles and Dates if you want to keep track of your choices on a single page.

**OLLI Talk Fees.** For Full and OLLI Carte members, there is no additional cost to register for and attend OLLI Talks. For General members, the fee for each OLLI Talk is \$15. If you register online, you may call the OLLI office to pay with a credit card, or you can return the last page with a check made payable to *OLLI at UMass Boston*.

### **Summary of OLLI Talk Locations**

#### **Zoom (online – link and details will be sent out the day before the presentation)**

- UMass Boston: The New 'Place to Be' (March 12)
- Panama Canal: Connection Between the Oceans That Changed the World (March 13)
- Shifting Gears: Safety and Mobility for Older Drivers (March 19)
- Purchasing Power: Preparing for a New Tech Purchase (March 25)
- Birding to Change the World (March 26)
- Nature in Everyday Life (April 2)
- Buster Keaton: Existential Slapstick (April 16)
- Gotland: Sweden's Paradise Island and Medieval Wonder (April 24)
- Beyonce: Bigger and Better than Taylor Swift (May 5)
- Ranking the U.S. in 2025: "Top 10 Lists" (May 14)
- What It Was: Growing Up When the Music Mattered (May 15)

#### **UMass Boston Campus (in-person)**

- My Immigrant Story: Welcomed to America (March 27)
- Quabbin Reservoir: The Meeting of Many Waters (April 10)
- Let's Watch Cartoons! (April 14)
- The Legacy of Hubble: The Telescope that Revolutionized Astronomy (April 17)
- Beyonce: Bigger and Better than Taylor Swift (May 5)

#### **Thayer Public Library in Braintree (in-person)**

- Accidental U.S. Presidents (March 20)
- A History of the South Shore's North River (April 3)
- A History of the Indian Head River of Hanover and Hanson (April 10)

#### **Hingham Public Library (in-person)**

- The Calendar We Use Today: The Gregorian Calendar (March 24)
- Stalwart Sentinels: The Lighthouses of Narragansett Bay (March 31)

#### **Special location: Brockton Public Library**

- Experience the Wonders of the Universe! Inside a Planetarium! (April 23)

[OLLI Talk Presentation Descriptions.](#) The following information was correct at the time of producing this document. Any changes to the status or date/time of a presentation will be announced in the weekly OLLI newsletter, *Connections*.

### **UMass Boston: The New 'Place to Be'**

**Date:** Wednesday, March 12

**Location:** Online via Zoom

Do you remember when UMass Boston was a bunch of drab brick buildings next to a dirty harbor with creepy underground garages? Well, it's not like that anymore! UMass Boston has become a place to be! Beautiful new buildings (and a few old brick ones for comparison)! A huge green grass and tree-filled space where the crusty old quad was! A premier location overlooking one of the cleanest harbors in the United States! And one of the most diverse student body populations among American colleges and universities today! UMass Boston has become not only a special place, but a world-class one. Join Genny Peterson for this online program where we will watch a 30-minute video by the organization The College Tour highlighting the new and improved UMass campus and the incredible students who go here. As an OLLI at UMass Boston member, you have a lot to be excited about – and being a part of UMB's campus is one of them. **Presenter: Genny Peterson** is a 2020 alum of UMass Boston with an MA in Public History. Attracted to its local focus and accessible cost, she couldn't be happier and prouder to say she is and will always be a Beacon.

### **Panama Canal: Connection Between the Oceans That Changed the World**

**Date:** Thursday, March 13

**Location:** Online via Zoom

The Panama Canal is considered one of the great accomplishments of the modern world. More than an engineering achievement, the Canal united the world, fostering global trade and prosperity, as well as a fusion of races, history and cultures. Started by the French in the 19th century, its completion relied on the United States, under the leadership of Teddy Roosevelt, to open in 1914. The lecturer, Barry Pell, traveled through the Canal on a four-masted sail ship. In this program, he will discuss the history, controversies, and ingenious design of the Canal. He will also take you along the Pacific coastal jungle to visit some of the wonderful wildlife creatures and plants of Panama and Costa Rica. **Presenter: Barry Pell** is a world traveler and photojournalist. He has traveled widely over five decades, visiting and documenting landscapes and cultures in 170 countries on all continents. Mr. Pell has also lived and traveled in China, eastern Europe, North Arica, and South America. He currently lectures on international cultures at schools, universities, libraries and community groups in the Boston area.

### **Shifting Gears: Safety and Mobility for Older Drivers**

**Date:** Wednesday, March 19

**Location:** Online via Zoom

Studies show that 94% of motor vehicle crashes are caused by driver error, which means nearly all the crashes that occur on our roadways are 100% preventable. Research also suggests that most people outlive their ability to drive by seven to ten years. The Registry of Motor Vehicles (RMV) "Shifting Gears" workshop is an interactive discussion about older driver safety and mobility. Topics include age-related changes and their impact driving, MA license renewal policies, older driver assessments and training resources, and the importance of planning for driving retirement. The

program also identifies how medical conditions, impairments, and medications can affect driving ability. Workshop attendees will be able to identify warning signs of unsafe driving, understand RMV policies and procedures, and learn techniques to use to prepare for driving retirement and to help friends and families identify alternatives to driving. **Presenter: Michele Ellicks** has been presenting safe driving workshops for the Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles since August 2000. Ellicks' workshops focus on education and advocacy for older driver safety, mobility, and provides best practices for planning for driving retirement. She has presented in nearly every city and town across the state. Ellicks holds a B.S. from Northeastern University's Boston Bouvé College of Health Sciences.

### **Accidental U.S. Presidents**

**Date:** Thursday, March 20

**Location:** Thayer Public Library, Braintree

Not all U.S. presidents were elected. Some were accidental. When a sitting president dies or otherwise leaves office, someone else has to do the job. In this OLLI Talk, you will learn who succeeded in the nine instances this has occurred in the history of the USA. **Presenter: David Rabinowitz** retired from decades of computer industry teaching, sales support, and problem solving and is currently indulging in his interests of history and culture.

### **The Calendar We Use Today: The Gregorian Calendar**

**Date:** Monday, March 24

**Location:** Hingham Public Library

The calendar is something we take for granted, but it took a long time for the one we use now to come into common use. This calendar, the Gregorian Calendar, dates back to the 1500s. It's only been in use for 500 years! What came before? And how did the Gregorian Calendar come to be? **Presenter: David Rabinowitz** retired from decades of computer industry teaching, sales support, and problem solving and is currently indulging in his interests of history and culture.

### **Purchasing Power: Preparing for a New Tech Purchase**

**Date:** Tuesday, March 25

**Location:** Online via Zoom

The options for gadgets is seemingly limitless, and can definitely be overwhelming. Come chat and get a baseline understanding of how to prepare for purchasing a new computer, mobile phone, tablet, Smart TV, or other piece of technology and learn to tailor it to your needs. We will talk about technical considerations as well as personal ones to help you go into your next purchase with confidence! **Presenter: Alison Murray** is the Senior Information Security Specialist for the Information Security Office at UMass Boston, and holds an MS in Security Studies: Cybersecurity Concentration and certifications for CISSP, CCSP, and Security+. Alison is passionate about demystifying Cybersecurity and technology so that everyone can better protect themselves.

### **Birding to Change the World**

**Date:** Wednesday, March 26

**Location:** OLLI's Zoom Account

This talk will reveal the ways birds enlighten and enliven human existence. Come learn how birds are intertwined with countless conservation issues, inspire environmental and social justice, and

model to humans how to live ethically, cooperatively, and with beauty at the forefront of our lives.

**Presenter: Jennalyn Speer** has previously offered OLLI programs on birds, trees, and public history. She has degrees in Fine Art (MFA, BA) and Elementary Education (BS) as well as a graduate Museum Studies certificate. She is a professional artist whose work focuses on bird conservation. A self-professed “bird-nerd” Jennalyn is a member of the Tennessee Ornithological Society. She currently lives in Tennessee but grew up in New York - which is where she became friends with OLLI's program coordinator, Genny Peterson!

### **My Immigrant Story: Welcomed to America**

**Date:** Thursday, March 27

**Location:** Room 617, 3rd Floor, McCormack Hall, UMass Boston

Due to the continued encouragement and support from teachers and mentors, many immigrants find opportunities to flourish in the United States. Moving here permanently twenty-two years ago seemed a daunting task. However, several individuals have contributed to creating an exciting journey of growth for two decades. By sharing some stories of people in this country who have helped me become successful as a Dominican immigrant, I want to counter the erroneous story that immigrants are not welcome in the US. Even though we face challenges, there is also much belief in us. **Presenter: Javier Marquez** is an Everett, Massachusetts-based composer, and Music Director at the First Baptist Church of Salem, MA and St. Peter's Episcopal Church. He is a self-taught musician from the Dominican Republic, and a graduate of Salem State University and UMass (Amherst) with degrees in music and composition.

### **Stalwart Sentinels: The Lighthouses of Narragansett Bay**

**Date:** Monday, March 31

**Location:** Hingham Public Library

“Lighthouses are not just stone, brick, metal, and glass. There’s a human story at every lighthouse.” – Elinor DeWire This talk will explore the history and fate of many of the more than 20 lighthouses of Narragansett Bay in Rhode Island. Additionally, the impact of the 1938 Hurricane and other local landmarks in this area will be briefly discussed. **Presenter: Marguerite Magri** took a 7-hour lighthouse tour in Rhode Island during Spring 2024 and wants to share the knowledge gained. Who doesn't love a lighthouse! They are beautiful in their own right and offer a rich and unique history.

### **Nature in Everyday Life**

**Date:** Wednesday, April 2

**Location:** Online via Zoom

Society suffers from what Richard Louv dubbed “nature deficit disorder”. This talk will outline the need to connect with nature and why the effort is worth it. Drawing inspiration from a wide range of contemporary science writing, formal and informal teaching experience, and a desire to integrate nature into her individual and family life, this talk will offer practical strategies to meaningfully engage yourself and those you love with the natural world. **Presenter: Jennalyn Speer** has previously offered OLLI programs on birds, trees, and public history. She has degrees in Fine Art (MFA, BA) and Elementary Education (BS) as well as a graduate Museum Studies certificate. She is a professional artist whose work focuses on bird conservation. A self-professed “bird-nerd” Jennalyn is a member of the Tennessee Ornithological Society. She currently lives in Tennessee but grew up in New York - which is where she became friends with OLLI's program coordinator, Genny Peterson!

### **A History of the South Shore's North River**

**Date:** Thursday, April 3

**Location:** Thayer Public Library, Braintree

A slideshow overview of the North River's history, beginning in pre-Colonial times, and extending through the 20th century. Topics will include early settlers on the river, milling and manufacturing, and the shipbuilding era, along with salt haying, packet ships, the Portland Gale and the impact of the construction of Route 3. Also included: a brief introduction to the North & South Rivers Watershed Association (NSRWA), and its 50+ years of advocacy on behalf of the rivers. The North River flows through Hanover, Pembroke, Norwell, Marshfield, and Scituate, MA. **Presenter: Kezia (pronounced Kee-za) Bacon** fell in love with the North and South Rivers as a teenager and began researching and writing about them while at Hampshire College. She has been on the staff of the North & South Rivers Watershed Association in various capacities since 1993.

### **A History of the Indian Head River of Hanover and Hanson**

**Date:** Thursday, April 10

**Location:** Thayer Public Library, Braintree

A slideshow overview of the Indian Head River's history, beginning in pre-Colonial times, and extending through the 20th century. Topics will include early settlers on the river; bridges, mills and factories; tributaries and fisheries; and issues concerning the river today. Also included: a brief introduction to the North & South Rivers Watershed Association (NSRWA), and its 50+ years of advocacy on behalf of the rivers. The Indian Head River flows through Hanover, Hanson, and Pembroke, MA. **Presenter: Kezia (pronounced Kee-za) Bacon** fell in love with the North and South Rivers as a teenager and began researching and writing about them while at Hampshire College. She has been on the staff of the North & South Rivers Watershed Association in various capacities since 1993.

### **Quabbin Reservoir: The Meeting of Many Waters**

**Date:** Thursday, April 10

**Location:** Room 617, 3rd Floor, McCormack Hall, UMass Boston

Would you like to learn more about Boston's drinking water supply? This presentation will cover the history and background surrounding the creation of the Quabbin Reservoir in central Massachusetts. The presenter will talk about how and why the reservoir was created as well as the towns that were disestablished during the creation of the water body. OLLI members will learn about watershed protection principles and how they benefit in general and how it not only benefits water quality, but also wildlife populations. **Presenter: Justin Gonsor** grew up towards western MA and went to school at UMass, Amherst where he received a Bachelor of Science. Passionate about the outdoors, Justin worked for DCR-DWSP for about 15 years educating the public about watershed protection and conservation.

### **Let's Watch Cartoons!**

**Date:** Monday, April 14

**Location:** Room 617, 3rd Floor, McCormack Hall, UMass Boston

Japanese cartoons! But wait! Before you think "Not for me!" give two Japanese animated films or TV shows a chance during this OLLI Talk, which will showcase fifteen minute clips from each with

additional information provided by Genny Peterson. Ever heard of anime? Anime (ah-nee-may) is the Japanese word for animation, but to Americans, it means Japanese animation. And it's what a lot of young people are watching these days! But is anime just for kids? Definitely not! Come watch cartoons with us! **Presenter: Genny Peterson** first watched anime when she was 5 years old on a TV with an antenna – which meant sometimes her first anime show was pretty fuzzy! But she loved it anyway! Almost 30 years later she wrote a graduate thesis on her favorite series and how it reflects Japanese history, memory, and identity. She looks forward to doing a PhD on a similar topic someday.

### **Buster Keaton: Existential Slapstick**

**Date:** Wednesday, April 16

**Location:** Online via Zoom | **11:45 a.m.–1:15 p.m.**

Silent film star Buster Keaton is recognized as one of the most daring, inventive and hilarious comedians ever. Using copious clips, we'll see how Keaton's art springs from the beginnings of comedy and how, without dialogue, he employs almost every other element of cinema. We'll look at Keaton's career, from his first (and pretty much last) onscreen smile at age 22 to doing pratfalls at 70, scenes that show both his cinematic ingenuity and almost unbelievable physicality, including the most dangerous stunt in Hollywood history. See why Orson Welles called Keaton "a supreme artist"... and, not incidentally, really really funny. **Presenter: David Misch** is a former comedian, screenwriter ("Mork and Mindy," "Saturday Night Live," "The Muppets Take Manhattan"), author ("Funny: The Book"), teacher (USC and UCLA) and lecturer at Yale, Columbia, Oxford, the Smithsonian, 92Y (NYC), Austin Film Festival, and more than 30 lifelong learning programs around the country. More at [davidmisch.com](http://davidmisch.com).

### **The Legacy of Hubble: The Telescope that Revolutionized Astronomy**

**Date:** Thursday, April 17

**Location:** Room 617, 3rd Floor, McCormack Hall, UMass Boston

In this presentation, we will first review the basic information, history, components, and future fate of the Observatory. We will see how Hubble's data is transformed from black and white to color pictures. We will immerse ourselves in its most famous images: the Pillars of Creation, the Mystic Mountain, the Ultra Deep Field, and the glowing Saturn Planetary Nebula which demonstrates what will happen near the end of the Sun's life. Finally, we will see how Hubble extended its reach by using the immense gravity of galaxy clusters that warp space around them into giant magnifying lenses. **Presenter:** Although **Tim Wheelock** has spent years studying and teaching neuroanatomy, his first love has always been astronomy. From the beginning of the pandemic, he has conducted a 4 year intensive study of the field from asteroids to the fate of the Universe. This presentation is a portion of that adventure.

### **Experience the Wonders of the Universe! Inside a Planetarium!**

**Date:** Wednesday, April 23

**Location:** Brockton Public Library | **12–1:30 p.m.**

Imagine stepping into a 25' diameter dome-shaped theater where unlike a flat screen, the ceiling is a giant screen, curving above and around you. You're sitting in the comfort of a folding camping chair and when the show begins, the lights dim completely. Then, the dome lights up with a breathtakingly realistic view of the night sky, filled with stars, constellations, planets, and galaxies.

One 30-minute video will take you on a journey from Earth to the Universe and a second 29-minute video reaches out to discover planets beyond our solar system. Questions will be answered after each program. Whether you're a space enthusiast or just curious, these two planetarium shows will be a captivating way to connect with the stars. Note that the all-encompassing immersive videos may make some claustrophobic individuals feel uneasy. A quick and easy exit during the programs will be provided if necessary. The central projection may require you to crane your neck upward, which can be uncomfortable to some for long periods. **Presenter:** Since retiring from UMass Boston several years ago, **Pat Monteith** rekindled her interest in the space program and was selected as a NASA/JPL Solar System Ambassador in 2016, a role in which she has conducted hundreds of programs (including with OLLI) about NASA and various space science topics. Pat now has access to the Brockton Public Library's mobile planetarium to conduct immersive programs.

### **Gotland: Sweden's Paradise Island and Medieval Wonder**

**Date:** Thursday, April 24

**Location:** Online via Zoom

Gotland, located in the Baltic Sea, is Sweden's largest island. Little known or visited by Americans, Gotland has a stunning landscape and a coastline dominated by sculptural sea stacks, limestone monoliths created by natural erosion during the last Ice Age. It is also historically significant, with its main town, Visby, a gem filled with Viking and medieval age architectural riches. A designated UNESCO World Heritage Site and the center of Baltic trade between the 12th and 14th centuries, Visby is the best-preserved walled town in northern Europe. Barry Pell, the lecturer, visited Gotland and Sweden's capital, Stockholm, during the country's national Midsummer holiday. This program includes his photography. **Presenter: Barry Pell** is a world traveler and photojournalist. He has traveled widely over five decades, visiting and documenting landscapes and cultures in 170 countries on all continents. Mr. Pell has also lived and traveled in China, eastern Europe, North Arica, and South America. He currently lectures on international cultures at schools, universities, libraries and community groups in the Boston area.

### **Beyonce: Bigger and Better than Taylor Swift**

**Date:** Monday, May 5

**Hybrid Location:** In-person in Room 617, 3rd Floor, McCormack Hall, UMass Boston and online via Zoom

You probably know her name. You probably have seen her face. You may recall her singing "At Last" at President Obama's Inaugural Ball in 2009 or jiving with Prince at the Grammy's or performing at the Superbowl Halftime Show (twice). She is a world-renowned recording artist and highly decorated - she has 35 wins at the Grammys, for a start. But why has Beyonce not gotten the same media coverage, the same American hype and adulation, that Taylor Swift has been awarded, especially in the last several years? Let me take you on a highly-opinionated journey with a few answers and a whole lot more wonderful, beautiful, and deeply moving information about the one, the only, Beyonce. **Presenter: Genny Peterson** didn't know what to think about Beyonce for a long time. How could anyone not love some of her music? But how could a girl who took modesty seriously make peace with the sexy superstar? Well, she got there in the end. And she's glad she did. Genny grew up in a rural county in western New York. With midwestern values rooted in buttoned-up Protestantism and parents raised in the 1950s, Beyonce and Black culture in general were a foreign culture. But who can deny the catchiness of "Bootylicious?" The powerful anthem "Who Runs the World - Girls!" And the depth of "If I Were a Boy?" Not this girl.

## **Ranking the U.S. in 2025: "Top 10 Lists"**

**Date:** Wednesday, May 14

**Location:** Online via Zoom | **11:45 a.m.–1:15 p.m.**

Where does the U.S. compare in meeting the challenges that exist in 2025? We will examine some 20 topics including: taxes, economy, environment, education, energy, healthcare, climate change, immigration, safety, prosperity, music, personal happiness, et al.. The "Top 10" format provides a quick "snap-shot" of the U.S. rank relative to other nations. Our sources are international surveys by highly credible and impartial world-wide organizations. This is the 4th Annual Edition for the program and includes three discussion breaks. A complete pdf copy will be supplied in advance.

**Presenter: Doug Stowell** is a consumer and political polling veteran in both U.S. and EU markets. His career includes Market Research Director for the Xerox Corp., U.S. Clients Director for the U.K. firm NOP, Ltd. in London and Sr. Polling Executive - Wirthlin Worldwide in Washington, D.C.. He launched Market Resource Associates, in 2008 and conducts opinion research on global issues today. He is a member of the Furman University Osher Life-Long-Learning Group in Greenville, SC and conducts ZOOM programs for more than 80 organizations world-wide.

## **What It Was: Growing Up When the Music Mattered**

**Date:** Thursday, May 15

**Location:** Online via Zoom | **11:45 a.m.–1:15 p.m.**

When you think of rock & roll, do you think of that classic era of the Fifties, Sixties, and Seventies? I do. The music was incredible. Just hearing it made you glad to be alive. But they were tumultuous times, too. Demonstrations over civil rights, the Viet Nam war, political assassinations - sometimes it seemed like the world was coming apart. The music helped us get through it. I was the first rock 'n' roll columnist for The Denver Post, wrote for Rolling Stone, and worked in freeform radio, too. I met, interviewed, and partied with Jimi, Janis, Jim Morrison, the Stones, and many other rock stars when we all were just kids trying to figure it out. [This is my memoir](#) of coming of age in those days of wonder and rage. **Presenter: James Pagliasotti**, at age 23, became the first rock music columnist for The Denver Post, where he wrote about music and the counterculture from 1968-74. His work appeared in Rolling Stone magazine and various other publications. He also did shows as a deejay. He is the author of three books, the blog [jamespagliasotti.substack.com](http://jamespagliasotti.substack.com), and is the creator of [www.radicalradio.media](http://www.radicalradio.media).



## Spring 2025 OLLI Talk Presentations – Titles and Dates

Below is a list of all the OLLI Talks in this document. As members have done in the past, they can print this last page, check off what they wish to register for, and send back to the OLLI office. Our mailing address is: OLLI UMass Boston, 3rd Floor McCormack Hall, 100 Morrissey Blvd, Boston, MA 02125. Please make sure to indicate the correct location if there is more than one listed. **OLLI Talk fee reminder:** Full and OLLI Carte members do not need to pay extra to register and attend OLLI Talks. For General members, there is a fee of \$15 per OLLI Talk that needs to be paid at the time of registration.

- UMass Boston: The New 'Place to Be' (March 12, Zoom)
- Panama Canal: Connection Between the Oceans That Changed the World (March 13, Zoom)
- Shifting Gears: Safety and Mobility for Older Drivers (March 19, Zoom)
- Accidental U.S. Presidents (March 20, Braintree)
- The Calendar We Use Today: The Gregorian Calendar (March 24, Hingham)
- Purchasing Power: Preparing for a New Tech Purchase (March 25, Zoom)
- Birding to Change the World (March 26, Zoom)
- My Immigrant Story: Welcomed to America (March 27, UMass Boston)
- Stalwart Sentinels: The Lighthouses of Narragansett Bay (March 31, Hingham)
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- Quabbin Reservoir: The Meeting of Many Waters (April 10, UMass Boston)
- Let's Watch Cartoons! (April 14, UMass Boston)
- Buster Keaton: Existential Slapstick (April 16, Zoom)
- The Legacy of Hubble: The Telescope that Revolutionized Astronomy (April 17, UMass Boston)
- Experience the Wonders of the Universe! Inside a Planetarium! (April 23, Brockton Pubic Library)
- Gotland: Sweden's Paradise Island and Medieval Wonder (April 24, Zoom)
- Beyonce: Bigger and Better than Taylor Swift (May 5, UMass Boston or Zoom)
- Ranking the U.S. in 2025: "Top 10 Lists" (May 14, Zoom)
- What It Was: Growing Up When the Music Mattered (May 15, Zoom)