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Where Curiosity Never Retires



OLLI NEWS — March 24, 2023

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Today's Lecture

Today's lecture is in-person at OLLI. The March 31 lecture will be online and then the remaining lectures will be in-person. **In-person spring lectures are being in Room A on the first floor at OLLI: 4801 Massachusetts Ave. NW. Lectures are on Fridays from 1:30-2:30 PM. Registration is required to attend in-person lectures.** Registration opens at 10:00 AM on the Friday prior to each lecture and is via an event on the [OLLI website events calendar](#) or the **direct link below.**



Natwar Gandhi, *How an Immigrant Helped Save the Nation's Capital from Financial Ruin*

March 24

1:30-2:30 PM

In-Person at OLLI

[Register](#)

How did Natwar Gandhi, an impoverished immigrant with seven dollars in his pocket make his way to the United States, remake his life, and ultimately, become the chief financial officer of Washington, DC, playing a key role in transforming the nation's capital from a near-bankrupt municipality into a financially healthy major American city?

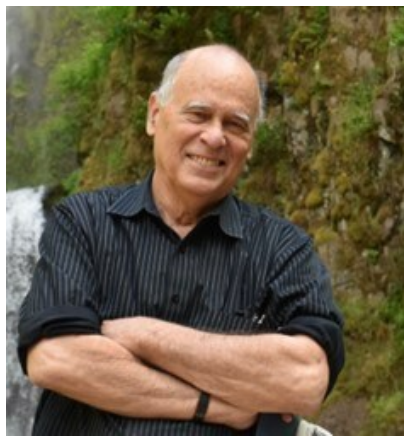
Natwar M. Gandhi retired in January 2014 after serving 13 years as independent Chief Financial Officer (CFO) of the District of Columbia, where he was responsible for Washington, DC's finances, including its approximately \$12 billion in annual operating and capital funds. As the independent CFO, Gandhi managed the District's financial operations, including more than 1,200 staff members. Gandhi also sat on the boards of the Washington Convention and Sports Authority and Destination DC.

During Gandhi's tenure as CFO, the District was transformed from a deficit-plagued, junk bond rated jurisdiction with \$550 million negative fund balance into a financially healthy municipality with a string of balanced budgets and a fund balance of \$1.5 billion at the end of 2013. Gandhi secured multiple rating upgrades for its general obligation bonds, which are presently rated in AA and AAA categories.

During 2014-2016, Gandhi was Distinguished Policy Fellow at Georgetown University's McDonough School of Business. Presently, he consults with the World Bank in its efforts to create financially sustainable cities around the world. He is also a member of Board of Trustees of Gallaudet University and a member of Boards of Honorary Trustees at Shakespeare Theater Company as well as Arena Stage. He belongs to the Metropolitan Club of Washington, DC.

His recently published memoir, *Still the Promised Land* is the fascinating and deeply personal story of how an impoverished immigrant made his way to the new world, remade his life, and ultimately, became the Chief Financial Officer of Washington.

Next Week's Lecture



Richard Walker, *The Living New Deal*

March 31

1:30-2:30 PM

Online via Zoom

How can the New Deal, which seems like a vague memory from history books, be living? UC Berkeley Emeritus Professor Richard Walker will enlighten us about The Living New Deal, an organization that is uncovering the immense riches of New Deal public works and documenting and publicizing that massive legacy as well as preserving it.

Richard Walker is Professor Emeritus of Geography at UC Berkeley, where he taught from 1975 to 2012. He is author of scores of articles and six books, including classics in economic geography and the development of California. His latest book is *Pictures of a Gone City: Tech and the Dark Side of Prosperity in the San Francisco Bay Area* (2018). Walker's awards include Fulbright and Guggenheim Fellowships. He is currently Executive Director of the Living New Deal project.

No registration is required to attend online lectures. The Zoom link will be included in the 10:00 AM newsletter that morning. This lecture will also be recorded for those who cannot attend live.

April Lectures



Mark Schneider, *The Threat of Growing Authoritarianism South of Our Border*

April 7

1:30-2:30 PM

In-person at OLLI

What has happened to democracy in much of Central America, and what threats does it pose to the United States? These issues will be addressed by one of the United States' leading advocates for democracy and human rights in Latin America.



Judy Feder, *Do You Have to Worry About Medicare?*

April 14

1:30-2:30 PM

In-person at OLLI

Amidst jeers of “you lie” at the State of the Union Address, the health and income security programs for older Americans have again become a contentious political issue. Health policy expert Judy Feder will talk to us about the political and policy issues facing Medicare.



Molly Smith, *Life in the Eye of the Hurricane: Reflections on 25 years at the Mighty Arena Stage*

April 28

1:30-2:30 PM

In-person at OLLI

On the eve of her retirement from the Arena Stage, the legendary Molly Smith will talk to us about the joys, challenges, and artistic accomplishments over her twenty-five year tenure as Artistic Director of Washington’s leading theater.

Talk & Tour: Enslaved Washington DC

Edward Ingebretsen, *Talk & Tour: Enslaved Washington DC (1790-2023)*

Part One - Virtual Talk

Thursday, March 30

3:30-4:30 PM

Online via Zoom

This event is in two parts. Part one, this virtual talk, led by Ed Ingebretsen, examines the history of enslavement in the original Federal City and the fact that the District of Columbia was designed as an enclave of slaver power in 1790. Ed explores geography, policy, and unacknowledged historical sites, providing an archeology of memory that has been eliminated from view.

In part two on Saturday, April 22, Ed will lead an in-person, "walking pilgrimage" in DC, where he shares the history of the district and its founding as a slave market. [Register to attend the tour.](#)

Edward Ingebretsen holds advanced degrees in theology, philosophy and education, and a PhD from Duke University in American literature and culture. He has lived in DC since he began teaching at Georgetown University in 1986 where he is currently Professor Emeritus.

No registration is required. The Zoom link will be emailed to all those subscribed to the OLLI newsletter the morning of the talk.

Serendipity! Talk

Claire de Caumont-Luisi, *A Fascination with WWI Trench Art*

Wednesday, April 5

3:30-4:30 PM

In the midst of the First World War (1914-1918) a humble form of art emerged that was created by Allied soldiers who, gathering the debris of war from the battlefields around them, began to create artifacts of beauty, imagination and often of great artistry.

Trench art, as it became known from this period of trench warfare, stretches back to the Napoleonic Wars and doubtless far back into earlier historic conflicts. Examples of this battlefield art can be found in its various forms in many museums in the US and in Europe.

In WWI with the constant shooting over the trenches, countless numbers of empty artillery shell casings could be gathered. Many were very large brass casings which the soldier could form into different shapes and decorate. Using whatever tools were at hand, the artist could then puncture and etch elaborate patterns into the brass or twist the shell into fanciful forms.

Claire's collection contains 217 large brass sculptures and vases made from shell casings, each of which has its own story. She invites you to study the Allies' involvement in the war from the point of view of art, creativity, and commemoration.

Art collector and connoisseur of Trench Art, Claire Camont-Luisi, of French origin, has been living in Bethesda for the past 30 years in a house overflowing with dazzling items from her collection. Her passion for history has led her to be a Docent at the Library of Congress and at the George C. Marshall International Center, Dodona Manor, in Leesburg, VA. She is an avid collector of WWI Trench Art. She also restores highly-decorated Sicilian pony carts, each one an artistic treasure representing a unique area of Sicily, when she is not trying to practice Tai Chi. www.trenchartcollection.com

No registration is required. The Zoom link will be e-mailed to all those subscribed to the OLLI newsletter the morning of the talk.

Color Theory Projects



This week, participants in Mary Fran Miklitsch's Color Theory class did projects based on Goethe's Theory of Color Proportions (pictured above). Our members had a blast engaging in some hands-on learning!

Fall Classes are in the Digital Library

A selection of our Fall 2022 classes is now available for viewing in the Digital Library. Please note that in order to incorporate closed captions, we did not edit down the videos. To view the start of the class, fast forward approximately 20 minutes as you would when viewing recordings during an academic session. To enable closed captioning, click the "CC" icon to the far right of the play button and select "English (auto-generated) CC."

The Digital Library is now located on the website under "Classes." Go to the [Digital Library](#).

Spring 2023 Member Directory

The Spring 2023 Member Directory is now available for download from the [OLLI website](#). Members must be logged into the website to access the directory. Click on the "Documents" tab, and then "[For Members Only](#)."

AU Events

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY MUSEUM

Spring Schedule

February 4-May 21

Friday-Sunday

11:00 AM-4:00 PM

Reservations are not required for your visit. Admission is always free. Regarding groups and any questions about your visit, email museum@american.edu or visit their [website](#).

Flipping the Narrative: Historical Collections as Sites of Cultural Diplomacy

Friday, March 31

1:00-3:00 PM

At The Phillips Collection

[Register](#)

The world's museums feature extensive collections of cultural material made by Indigenous Australians, collected over extended periods in the context of programs of disciplinary inquiry. The disciplines, their methods, and museums themselves today face a kind of public reckoning that not only questions the historical processes involved in the making of these collections, but also poses the question of what it means to maintain such collections and institutions. Underlying these questions is often the presumption that institutions operated and continue to operate without Indigenous agency, power, or control.

This lecture seeks to explore a different presumption: it considers museum collections as containing forms of historic cultural diplomacy enacted by Indigenous people themselves – as expressive of their desire to extend and deepen knowledges of culture and experience across cultural worlds. If we are prepared to recognize this as a legitimate form of agency, we can re-frame the world's museums, from sites of ongoing colonization and dispossession to sites of cultural strength with the potential to shape and inform stronger, intercultural futures.

Yolnu Ceremonial Performance

Friday, March 31

6:00 PM

Katzen Arts Center

[Register](#)

Yolŋu artists and leaders will provide a ceremonial performance with a procession, *yidaki* (didgeridu) and *bilma* (clapping sticks) to culturally and spiritually open the exhibition.

Matha Nupanmi: A Summit of Yolnu Art and Ideas

Saturday, April 1

9:00 AM-4:00 PM

Katzen Arts Center

[Register](#)

This day of conversations and short films will feature Yolŋu artists and leaders, curators, art historians and anthropologists exploring Yolŋu art and culture from a rich variety of perspectives.

Do The Loop

Saturday, April 22

11:00 AM-4:00 PM

Washington, DC: American University Museum at the Katzen Art Center, The Kreeger Museum, Dumbarton Oaks, Jackson Art Center, Addison/Ripley Fine Art, and Klagsbrun Studios collaborate for Do The Loop, a free day of indoor and outdoor art programming complete with shuttle service provided between locations. [View more information.](#)

Gail Rebhan: *About Time*

Presented by the Alper Initiative for Washington Art

February 4-May 21

[Register](#)

For better and worse, nothing stays still. DC artist Gail Rebhan (b. 1953) knows that well and this, her first museum retrospective, explores her many different ways over four decades of using and reconfiguring the time-slicing medium of photography to reflect on macro-and-micro-dynamics of interactions inside families—her own and that of other immigrants—on the centuries of change in diverse areas of the nation’s capital, and on the marks of time revealed on her body (along with periodic attempts to fight it) from young adult, to mother of two sons, then caregiver of an aging father, to the present as she continues making art and living while facing the start of her seventh decade. OLLI is excited to be a co-sponsor for this exhibit. There are several Gallery Talks for which you can register.

AMERICAN UNIVERISTY ARBORETUM

Guided Tour of the American University Arboretum

Monday, April 3

7:00 PM

[RSVP](#)

Did you know that the American University campus is an accredited Arboretum with over 4,000 trees and more than 500 different species and varieties of woody plants? Please join us for a guided walking tour, under the light of the moon, of the AU Arboretum and Gardens. Stroll with us through campus and learn about the history of the university along with learning about the trees and gardens and the sustainable features throughout campus.

Please arrive in front of the School of International Service (SIS) building at 7:00 PM for refreshments and check-in. Parking is free after 5:00 PM in our AU garages. The closest garage is the School of International Service garage. The entrance is at the corner of Nebraska Ave NW and New Mexico Ave NW. This is a family friendly event and pets are welcome.

CENTER FOR ISRAEL STUDIES

Israel’s Lack of a Constitution and the Present Political Crisis, Amos Perlmutter Memorial Lecture by Menahem Ben-Sasson

Monday, March 27

7:00 PM

American University East Campus, Constitution Hall

[RSVP](#)

The attempts of Israel’s present government at a radical judicial reform have led to massive protests

within and outside Israel. As one of the very few countries in the world without a formal constitution, Israel's democracy is especially volatile. What difference would a constitution for Israel make at this time?

As former Chairman of the Knesset's Constitution, Law and Justice Committee, Professor Menahem Ben-Sasson is especially equipped to discuss these questions. Under his leadership the Knesset undertook the last attempt to date to introduce a constitution for Israel. Please join us in person as Hebrew University Chancellor Menahem Ben-Sasson delivers the Amos Perlmutter Memorial Lecture, "Israel's Lack of a Constitution and the Present Political Crisis."

Co-sponsored by the School of Public Affairs, Center for Israel Studies and Washington College of Law International Legal and Comparative Legal Studies. Reception following discussion.

SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL SERVICE

President-elect of Belarus, Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, *Belarus and the Struggle for Democracy in Europe*

Monday, March 27

11:00 AM-12:30 PM

SIS Founder's Room, American University Campus

[RSVP](#)

Belarus has been central to the struggle for democracy in Europe since the mass non-violent democratic protest movement of 2020. With the Russo-Ukrainian war now entering its second year, Belarus is playing a critical role in the armed struggle for European democracy as both a staging ground for Russian forces and a critical point of popular and partisan resistance to Russian efforts to subjugate its neighbors. Please join us to discuss Belarus' vital role in the future of Europe with President-elect Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya of Belarus. SIS professor Keith Darden will moderate this conversation, followed by an audience Q and A.

OSHER LIFELONG LEARNING INSTITUTE AT AMERICAN UNIVERSITY MISSION

The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at American University is an association of, by, and for the people in the Washington, DC area who wish to continue to study and learn.

OLLI at AU is dedicated to the proposition that learning is a lifelong process and that *curiosity never retires*.

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