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## Fall 2020

*Editor: Carol Green*

### President's Message - October 1, 2020

The COVID-19 pandemic has altered the lives and behavior of human beings across the world in ways both dramatic and mundane. One such alteration is especially important for NCWA members. The pandemic is turning us all into Techies.

Thanks to Zoom, Skype, FaceTime, and other platforms, most of us are communicating with friends, family, and colleagues in new, often surprisingly effective, ways. We're organizing business meetings across time zones, enjoying virtual cocktail parties with friends, and staying in touch with our children and grandchildren through electronic media that are second nature to them. (If not to us!)

Without these technological alternatives, it would have been full stop for the 2020/2021 season of Naples Council on World Affairs programming. No member of the board regarded such a result acceptable.

As soon as the pandemic's massive impact became clear in late March, our volunteer leadership began to plan new ways to present our traditional agenda of conversations on important topics. In this year of unprecedented international events and a U.S. presidential election, we could not do otherwise. Our mission of educating and inspiring our stakeholders on critical global affairs demanded no less.

So, we begin the new season with an impressive, and expanded, lineup of virtual lectures. The twelve speakers that Mimi Gregory and the Program Committee have confirmed will challenge and enlighten us.

Gerry Melnick and his Great Decisions team are helping participants become more comfortable with the Zoom technology they will be using. Ed Leland and the Southwest Florida Model UN Committee are working with tech-savvy FGCU students and high school educators to develop a different, but still impactful experience for participants.

Likewise, Bob Haffa and the School Outreach Committee are working on ways to present our traditionally successful Academic World Quest competitions virtually and to maintain momentum on our summer scholarship programs.

Numerous NCWA volunteers have stepped in to help in this transformation. Board members Gunther Winkler and Carol Green have been especially helpful in sharing their technological expertise. Our audio-visual guru Tom James has enforced both creativity and discipline to ensure the highest possible quality in our lectures.

We have indeed been hard at work. But our season will be a success only if you, our members, engage actively and widely with our new virtual formats. Even if you are unfamiliar with using iPads, phones, or computers to engage in using Zoom, we encourage you to dive in! We're developing plans to make it easy for you.

It will be, for a while, disappointing not to see familiar faces at St. John the Evangelist Church for our lectures or in meeting rooms across the area for

Great Decisions groups or other meetings. However, we believe that you'll find what we've replaced these in-person gatherings with will educate and inspire you, as always.

Stay healthy and safe and boot up, NCWA Techies!

JIM SCHMOTTER

President



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## OUR MISSION:

**To educate, inspire and engage our community in international affairs and critical global issues**

### Officers:

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PLEASE CHECK OUR WEBSITE OFTEN! At <https://www.ncwa-fl.org> you can get the latest information about NCWA events, lectures (and any changes) and news and sign up for programs, such as Great Decisions and more! It's updated frequently. Just click on the Announcements link on the home page.

## Program News



**By MIMI GREGORY**  
**Chair, Program Committee**

Autumn greetings to all our members. We hope this finds everyone safe and well wherever you are. We are prepared for the opening of a “Virtual Season” of wonderful speakers who, along with our members, will keep us abreast of foreign policy and global affairs for the next seven months. We are endeavoring to bring “extras” to each of our programs and believe that you will be pleased with the results!

We will begin our odyssey with a lecture on Ted Widmer’s wonderful book:

*Lincoln on the Verge: 13 days to Washington.* As Lincoln leaves his home in Springfield, Illinois, traveling South to be inaugurated in Washington, simultaneously, Jefferson Davis is traveling North to claim the presidency for the Confederacy. Lincoln faces a country so divided that there is little hope for reconciliation, as the two parties meet on the eve of the Civil War.

There is much in this wonderful read that will resonate with current events.

**Onward:** We will speak of Pakistan, China, the art of war, Ukraine remains in the picture, COVID-19, isolationism, whether we are in the twilight of democracy, cybercrime and artificial intelligence, Turkey, Egypt and the Middle East -- a foreign policy earful for our 2020/21 season.

See you soon, virtually, one and all!

**“THE CHALLENGE OF FREEDOM”  
THE NCWA LECTURE SEASON**

*Lecture times and Zoom links will be issued by email prior to the dates.*

**October 12:** - bonus lecture for NCWA full members only

**“Lincoln on the Verge: 13 Days to Washington”**

**Ted Widmer, Ph.D.,** Macaulay Honors College.

**November 2:**

**“Twilight of Democracy; The Seductive Lure of Authoritarianism”**

**Anne Applebaum,** American Historian, Journalist, “The Atlantic”

**November 16:**

**“The Battle for Pakistan, The Bitter U.S. Friendship and a Tough  
Neighborhood”**

**Shuja Nawaz:** Distinguished Fellow, South Asia Center, The Atlantic Council

**December 7:**

**"China's Western Horizon: Beijing and the New Geopolitics of Eurasia"**

**Daniel S. Markey**, Professor, Johns Hopkins University, SAIS.

**January 11:**

**"The Art of War in an Age of Peace: A New U.S. Grand Strategy of Resolute Restraint"**

**Michael E. O'Hanlon**, Senior Fellow, Brookings Institution.

**January 25:**

**"Is There A New Nuclear Reality in Our Future?"**

**Joseph Cirincione**, Author of "Bomb Scare: The History and Future of Nuclear Weapons"

**February 8:**

**"Isolationism: A History of America's Efforts to Shield Itself from the World"**

**Charles A. Kupchan**, Senior Fellow, Council on Foreign Relations.

**February 22:**

**"The Global Economy in a Post Covid-19 World"**

**Daniel Alpert**, Founding and Managing Partner, Westwood Capital.

**March 8:**

**"Global Geopolitical Power Shifts and 5G, Quantum and AI"**

**Richard B. Andres**, Professor, U.S. National War College

**March 22:**

**"Turkey, Egypt, and the Battle for the Middle East"**

**Steven A. Cook**, Senior Fellow, Council on Foreign Relations, and

**Ambassador Nabil Fahmy**, Dean, American University of Cairo.

**April 5:**

**“Global Health in the Time of Covid-19”**

**Dr. J. Stephen Morrison**, Director, Global Health Center, Center for Strategic and International Studies.

**April 19:** - bonus lecture for NCWA full members only

**“Ukraine: The Clear and Present Danger Living as Russia’s Neighbor”**

**Ambassador William B. Taylor**, United States Institute of Peace

## Great Decisions 2021



By **GERRY MELNICK**  
**Great Decisions Chair**

Someone once said, “Challenges are what makes life interesting. Overcoming them is what makes it meaningful.”

The pandemic has transformed our lives and “modus operandi” and this is especially true for Great Decisions, an eight-week world affairs discussion program that will begin mid-January and end in mid-March. This year there are

724 participants registered in 28 groups. The average group size is set at 30 and each has an experienced leader. Group members volunteer to facilitate each discussion, recognize speakers and manage the course of the session.

In the *Tale of Two Cities* Charles Dickens wrote that “It was the best of times, the worst of times...”. Under the best of times, our groups have always met in nine different venues, but under the current circumstances all venues are not available to host our groups. Consequently, we have decided to hold our sessions utilizing Zoom, an easy, reliable cloud platform for video and audio conferencing. It will enable all GD members to attend and participate from the comfort of their own homes. In this, the worst of the pandemic, the venue changes, but Great Decision discussions will continue.

Annually, the Foreign Policy Association selects the topics for discussion and engages statesmen, diplomats, scholars, educators and other professionals, all of whom have expertise in the specific field of the designated topics, to write an article that becomes the basis for each weekly discussion. The articles, approximately 10 pages in length, are then compiled in a briefing book that every participant reads weekly in order to prepare for the subject to be discussed.

The topics for the 2021 program include:

- The Arctic
- China in Africa
- Brexit
- Persian Gulf Security
- Korea
- The WHO and the Pandemic
- The End (or Beginning) of Globalization, and
- Supply Chains in the Age of Covid

Discussions are kept on track by the facilitator, who ensures that everyone has an opportunity to express his or her viewpoint. Participants are urged to maintain an open mind and are free to put forth divergent viewpoints to



enhance robust discussion of the issues. This has led to the growth of Great Decisions and the need to be responsive to adding new groups to meet the demand. Invariably, the same participants annually register for the next year's program. Guests are permitted to attend a session upon request.

Registration is currently open and those interested should visit the NCWA website for information. Anyone who is considering joining and has questions should contact the GD Chair at [gerrymelnick@comcast.net](mailto:gerrymelnick@comcast.net) for more information.

**THERE ARE STILL OPENINGS IN OUR GREAT DECISIONS PROGRAM!**

Sign up before December 15, 2020

To register, go to [www.ncwa-fl.org](http://www.ncwa-fl.org)

Or call 239-649-3942

## School Outreach Committee



**By ROBERT HAFFA**  
**School Outreach Committee Chair**

Unfortunately, we were forced to curtail or cancel a number of the School

Outreach Committee's programs in the summer of 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our international scholarship winners were unable to travel, although we hope to offer them that same opportunity in the summer of 2021. Our Georgetown winners could not travel to Washington, D.C., but they did attend a weeklong virtual session in world affairs, and excerpts from their essays are below.

We successfully held our High School Academic World Quest competition in the spring but, again, our winning team from Naples High School could not participate in the national championships in Washington, as that event was also cancelled.

Similarly, we were forced to cancel our Middle School Academic World Quest competition because Collier County schools closed in March.

In the spring of 2021 we hope to conduct both high school and middle school AWQ competitions, but whether those events will be held in person or virtually remains uncertain. We will follow the guidance provided by the World Affairs Council of America, and hope for the best.

We also will conduct our competitions for international and Georgetown University scholarships in the new season. As of this writing, it is unclear what international scholarships will be offered. Equally important, it remains uncertain in this pandemic environment if international travel will occur during the summer of 2021 at all. If international travel is restricted, virtual programs may be offered and our winners may elect to participate in those programs, if they choose.

Similarly, the Georgetown competition will begin anew and, depending on progress in fighting the pandemic, that scholarship opportunity may turn out to be real or virtual. Notably, our winners from last year found the virtual experience valuable, and excerpts from their essays follow.

### **Georgetown student essays**

*“The Georgetown professors managed to fit many diverse topics within a week. From focusing on specific national threats to public health and pop culture, it was a shock. I realized that my knowledge on international relations was basic and surface level. I was surrounded by people from all over the world who were interested in the same things I was.*

*Understanding how economic, military, and geographical power compares among states changed how I perceived individual countries within the international system and power dynamics. We learned about ethics in terms of government along with the roles of the FBI and CIA. This program has further convinced me that a career in international affairs would be fulfilling and suitable.*

*The overall program was a wonderful experience and if I had the chance, I would do it all over again.”*

\* \* \*

*“Being part of the Georgetown National Security Academy was one of my best choices. I enjoyed almost everything about it. The Georgetown experience did influence me toward a course of study in world affairs.*

*I was undecided on what I wanted to study, but since there was a guest who works in the CIA and told us all about it, I feel like I want to focus on intelligence. I’m going to major in international politics, and then I’m going to try to get hired by an intelligence agency. “*

#### **REMINDER TO NCWA MEMBERS**

Please keep your profile information, including your email and snail mail addresses, up to date so that we can keep you informed! To edit your profile, sign on to [www.ncwa-fl.org](http://www.ncwa-fl.org) and go to Members, then View My Profile. Or, call 239-649-3942 and give us the information over the phone.

## Model United Nations



**By EDWIN LELAND**  
**Model UN Chair**

It is obvious to all that the 2020/2021 academic year will be like no other. Yet, those of us responsible for Southwest Florida Model United Nations (SWFLMUN) are dedicated to ensuring that the 2021 version is one of the very best, despite all the craziness.

Eleven highly relevant and particularly challenging committee topics were selected by the Florida Gulf Coast University MUN Club and posted on the SWFLMUN website in early June. Three examples are “Use of Artificial Intelligence to Influence Elections,” “Sex Education in War-Torn Areas,” and “Human Rights of Asylum Seekers.” A background guide to support all eleven communicated topics, plus the yet to be announced Security Council topic, will be available in November. The topics selected so far can be found here: <https://www.swflmun.org/committees--topics--and-guides>

The 2021 version of SWFLMUN is going to be very noticeably different than the norm. But, the intent is to retain as many beneficial features of the traditional format as possible, while also exploiting the advantages that a virtual platform can provide.

Input is being sought from area high school MUN coaches, FGCU faculty and students, and from MUN competitions that will take place in other parts of the country well before ours, which is presently scheduled March 1 and 2.

Also, software options to support a virtual format are being investigated, and a strong candidate has been identified. A goal is to finalize the exact form and schedule for SWFLMUN 2021 by early October.

This time around is likely to be particularly interesting and fulfilling for the many of us at the Naples Council on World Affairs who provide support for MUN and for the participating delegates.

## VILLAGE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM



**By JOYCE FLECHER**  
**Village Assistance Program Chair**

The Village Assistance Program for the current year is the Eldorado Textile Project on behalf of ACER Brazil, a training and ongoing sewing program for women who sell their decorative projects in the market.

The project is adding vocational training for seven older teenage girls to give

them a saleable skill of designing and sewing clothing. The facility required lighting and ventilation improvements and more professional sewing machines. The grant also covered additional sewing supplies. The original plan had been to open August 1. It had to be delayed and is now planned for October 1, due to again changing the facility to accommodate social distancing. There is an instructor funded by a different non-profit.

We are also still designing the coordination with a Collier County school because of the necessary program modifications in Collier County as well.

The Village Assistance Program (VAP) was initiated a few years ago by NCWA to provide modest financial assistance to small communities in economically distressed areas in foreign countries. VAP will only consider assisting projects in which NCWA members are directly involved.

## **Want a spouse or friend to receive the NCWA Newsletter?**

Currently the *Newsletter* is emailed to one address per member household. This electronic publication provides news and updates on the Council's myriad activities three times a year. We want to provide access to it for all interested stakeholders. If you would like us to send the *Newsletter* to another member of your family or a friend, just send the email address to [schmotterj@wcsu.edu](mailto:schmotterj@wcsu.edu).

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