

A Word (or more) about the World Affairs Council

by Jim Lenburg

“What is likely to happen to Cuba in light of the economic collapse in Venezuela?” teases Dr. George Peery, president of the Western North Carolina chapter of the World Affairs Council. That group’s September 10 meeting entitled “Cold War Redux: Cuba in the Trump era,” will be at 7:30 pm in the Reuter Center Manheimer Room. Further description of the program was offered by George Peery: “After a sea change in U.S.-Cuban relations during the Obama administration, Washington is once again turning up the heat on Havana, and a return to hostilities of years past. Speaker Jon Elliston, an Asheville-based journalist and historian, has visited Cuba frequently since the 1990s, most recently in May, and has written extensively about U.S.-Cuban relations.”

Other fall meeting topics include:

- October 1: Britain, Brexit, and Beyond”
- November 5: Canada-U.S. Trade Relationship: a 21st Century Partnership”
- December 3: India: Modi begins his Second Term

A special series, called “Great Decisions,” is offered each week from mid-January through the end of February. The topics of this series are chosen by the Foreign Policy Association (founded in 1918) and organized around issues of immediate global importance. Asheville programs are held in the Reuter Center Manheimer Room, but the local chapter also sponsors Great Decisions programs at centers in Hendersonville, Brevard and Tryon.

The World Affairs Councils of America were founded in 1954 and are today the largest grass roots educational program about foreign relations in the United States. The local chapter was organized almost 35 years ago by faculty and administrators at the University of North Carolina Asheville.

The local chapter strives to promote “international awareness and foster Western North Carolina’s global ties” as well as “encourage more active and effective participation in national policy debate. WAC at WNC, as it is affectionately called, presents monthly programs from September through December and again from March through May.

OLLI members receive reduced rates for membership in the organization as well as access to all the programs or a reduced fee to attend a single event. Annual membership for an individual is \$45; \$70 for a couple. Dr. George Peery, a retired Professor of Political Science at Mars Hill University, is the current president of the Western North Carolina World Affairs Council. For more information, you may contact him at gpeery@mhu.edu.

To learn more about the national organization, go to <https://www.worldaffairscouncils.org/>