

# World Affairs Council of the Desert

Engaging and Educating Adults and Students in International Affairs



## Our Vision



To engage and educate students and adults in world affairs through our speaker series and student programs

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2018-2019  
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## WACD Summer 2018 Newsletter

### Fall Speakers Address the Two "R's" -- Robotics and Russians

*October 21<sup>st</sup> --*

#### **AI: Robots Will Rise, But Will They Rule Us All?**

Speaker: Dr. David Danks



Dr. David Danks of Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh is one of the nation's brightest upcoming minds on the advances being driven by Artificial Intelligence. He will provide an insightful perspective on how the technologies spawned by AI are impacting our lives, our ethics and our world in ways which just a few years ago would have been classed as notions of science fiction.

Educated at Princeton with an M.A. and Ph.D in Philosophy from University of California, San Diego, Danks heads the Department of Philosophy at CMU. This promises to be an evening which will expand our minds and our thinking about the possibilities of our world in the future.

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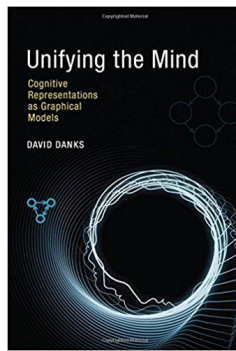


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Unifying the Mind: Cognitive Representations as Graphical  
Models, The MIT Press 2014

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*November 18<sup>th</sup>-*

## **America-Russia Relations: Evolving or Dissolving?**

Speaker: Dr. Jonathan Adelman

**Dr. Jonathan Adelman**, professor at the Josef Korbel School of International Studies at the University and is author or editor of 12 books on Russia, China and the Middle East and has made sixteen international speaking tours for the State Department. Awarded his Ph.D. from Columbia University, he was the doctoral supervisor for former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and is an Honorary Professor at Peking University in China.

In an engaging, thought-provoking evening, we could have no better candidate to address America's increasingly puzzling relationship and looming global and national security risks with Vladimir Putin and Russia than Dr. Jonathan Adelman.



The Rise of Israel: A History of a Revolutionary State,  
Routledge, London 2008

For WACD's Winter and Spring Programs, see Schedule below.



College of the Desert



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Drs. John & Sharon  
Welty

## Our Scholars Triumph in Washington!

The winners of our local WorldQuest competition, the team from Palm Desert High School, came in second in the national event among forty-five teams from across the country. The Carlos and Malu Alvarez 2018 Academic WorldQuest National Competition, held at the National Press Club on April 28th, was the sixteenth annual contest.



Top honors went to Plano West Senior High School representing the WAC Council of Dallas/Fort Worth. Third place was captured by Indian Hill High School sponsored by the WAC of Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky.

This year's contest focused on ten topics including NAFTA, ASEAN at 50, India's Bid for Global Power, Cybersecurity and Saudi Arabia.

The evening before the event, students, teachers and chaperones were welcomed at a reception at the headquarters of the United States Institute of Peace, one of the event's category sponsors. USIP Executive Vice President Ambassador William Taylor was the speaker.

World Affairs Councils of America is comprised of ninety local councils. Nationally, the educational programs of these organizations reach 500,000 people annually.

The next local event hosted by our council, the Porter Academic WorldQuest Competition, will take place on December 6<sup>th</sup>. Please consider volunteering for this event!



## President's Letter

We have had an eventful summer and can look forward to an exciting year ahead. Jim McFarlin and the program committee have delivered a full roster of speakers for the new season. We believe the committee has achieved the perfect mix of traditional and more contemporary topics that will appeal to a demographically diverse audience.

[Join Our Mailing List!](#)

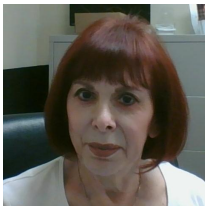
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WACD  
Administrator



Linda Borses  
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Over the summer, your board completed work on a comprehensive, integrated strategic plan. Called "Vision 2023," this blueprint for excellence is designed to strengthen, grow and empower WACD to become a respected, sustainable and vibrant community contributor in the years ahead. Our goal is to be the

"go-to" organization in the Coachella Valley for issues and perspectives on international affairs. On behalf of the entire board, I wish to thank Robert Radi and Charlotte Wang for their guidance, persistence and wisdom throughout this process.

I am pleased to inform you that WACD has been awarded the 2018 Gold Seal of Transparency on Guidestar. GuideStar is a research and rating organization that gathers, organizes, and distributes information about the 2.7 million U.S nonprofits. Their mission is to facilitate philanthropy by providing information that advances transparency, enables users to make better decisions, and encourages charitable giving. Their online tools now display information about WACD and its outreach efforts to 9 million + users.

Endorsements such as these support our efforts to attract sponsors and submit successful grant proposals.

Speaking of sponsors, we are continuing our tradition of encouraging members to be financial supporters of our student dinners. Student dinner sponsorships are \$1,000. Please consider hosting our area scholars for one of our dinners either yourself or together with a friend. What a great way to celebrate and encourage our youth!

Sincerely,

John Welty

## Meet Your Board

We welcome four new board members this year. Of course, certain newbies (Becky and Ed) are really old hands who have served terms in the past, lending our leadership team continuity and a welcome dose of institutional memory! For the first time, this year, we have added a student board member. We believe this election will keep our organization attuned to the needs of our young people. Despite his youth, Jonathan already has board experience on his resume!

New board members are pictured. Board members terms are also shown below:

**Jean Carrus**

2021

Jean is Chairman of our board, a life member and a director since 1985. She is a tireless philanthropist who has served on many boards nationally and in the Coachella Valley.

**Christopher Hebb**

2021

Chris was an executive with Kaiser Resources Ltd, Canada, and Kaiser Steel Corporation, Oakland CA. He is a former director of the International Churchill Society and its chapter in British Columbia.

**Gordon Kramer**

2020

Gordon is an aerospace engineer and former program manager at Hughes Aircraft Company. He also is a former certified financial planner with American Express and Ameriprise Financial.

**Becky Kurtz**

2021



Becky is the Executive Director of the Desert Town Hall and a former editor of Palm Springs Life magazine.

**James McFarlin**

2020

Jim chairs our program committee. He is a former Air Force Officer and high tech CEO. He also is the author of a cyber-thriller.

**Jonathan Ramont**

2019

Jonathan is a student trustee at College of the Desert and Academic Affairs Officer of the Associated Students of COD.

**Yul Roe**

2020

Yul is a landscape architect who practiced in Calgary and Vancouver before relocated to the Coachella Valley.

**Ed Tauber**

2021



Dr. Tauber is a former executive with Saatchi Advertising and former chairman of the marketing department at USC. He also founded his own company focused on brand extension research.

**David R. Thatcher**

2019

David is a vice president and senior financial advisor with The Cypress Group, a Division of Integrated Wealth Management. Previously, he was with Morgan Stanley and Merrill Lynch.

**Meegan Sullivan-Villa**

2021

Meegan is Secretary of our board. She is President and CEO of Proper Solutions, president of the Palm Desert Rotary Club and on the board of the Palm Desert Chamber of Commerce.

**John Welty**

2019

Dr. Welty is president of our board and president emeritus of California State University, Fresno, an institution he served for 22 years.

**John Westerholm**

2019

John is our vice president and CFO. He has enjoyed a long career in engineering, manufacturing and financial management.

More comprehensive biographies of our board members are available on our web site.



## Lively May Social Event Capped A Successful Year



In May, members came together at Desert Falls Country Club to celebrate the end of a very successful season. Fifty members enjoyed a social evening of international food and beverages. Hosts for the event were Diplomat members Katharine Russell and Phil Gagnard.

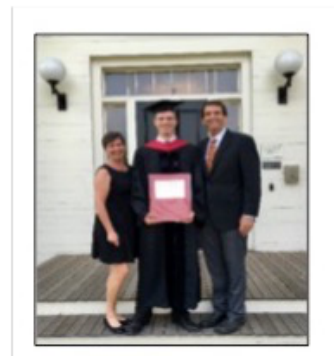
A highlight of the evening was a raffle of wines from around the world.

In addition to our dinner/lecture evenings, our council hosts member-only social events, another important benefit of joining our organization.

The next WACD social event is scheduled for December 14<sup>th</sup>, a holiday gathering not to be missed!

## Where In the World Are They Now?

We are excited to share news regarding two Academic WorldQuest participants from previous years:



**James Nelson** - James participated on the Desert Christian Academy team for three years. In 2006, Desert Christian took first place. Global challenges really captured James' interest. He attended Patrick Henry College, majoring in government with an emphasis on international policy. While a student, he edited a journal on international policy. He graduated Magna Cum Laude.

James attended Harvard Law School, graduating Cum Laude in 2016. For two years, he served as editor of the Harvard Law Review. After law school he clerked for an appellate judge in Pittsburgh.

Since 2017, he has been in appellate law practice at Morgan, Lewis and Bockius in Washington DC.

This Spring, he enjoyed a trip to Israel, a country which was a topic in one of his WorldQuest competitions. James, 26, lives with his wife and son in Arlington, Virginia.

**Andrew Blinkensop** - Andrew competed on the Palm prings High School team. A graduate of Harvard University, he received a Fulbright fellowship to study in Russia. Andrew is starting a Ph.D. program this fall at University of California - Berkeley, on a full scholarship.

We are so proud of these scholars!

## Board Member Spotlight



Christopher and Dorothy Hebb have homes in British Columbia and Palm Springs. Chris is a former executive vice president of Kaiser Resource Ltd. in Canada and senior vice president of Kaiser Steel Corporation in Oakland CA.

Chris has worked in a range of industries including oil and gas, coal, steel, food consumer products, diamond exploration real estate and investment management. He has significant experience in corporate turnarounds.

His career has taken him around the globe, and he has worked in Alaska, California, New York, London, Mexico City, Moscow, Hong Kong, Seoul, Tokyo and Canada.

Chris first visited the Coachella Valley when he was working for Kaiser Steel. The company had a plant in Fontana. Friends invited the Hebb's to the desert to play golf in the late 90's. They subsequently acquired a home at Desert Princess.

"We soon discovered the World Affairs Council and started attending events," Chris said. "We always enjoyed the speakers and have increasingly met and enjoyed the company of members."

Given his international career, it is no wonder that Chris' volunteer activities have focused on global political, business and legal issues. In addition to his work with WACD, Chris is president of the Churchill Society of British Columbia, serving since 2003. He was formerly director of the International Churchill Society based in Washington, DC. The society is focused on the life and times of Winston Churchill and geopolitics from his times to the present, holding speaker events and running essay contests.



Chris is a member of the Association for Corporate Growth. He was a member of the steering committee of the Canadian American Business Council for the council's 2008 annual conference. He is a retired member of the Law Societies of Alberta and British Columbia.

Chris is a strong supporter of WorldQuest and also has facilitated speakers between his two north American speaker programs.

"The United States media is extremely insular in its presentation of the news," Chris said. "Americans have too few opportunities to learn of events in other parts of the world, the history of those events and their influence on political decisions in the U.S. WACD can contribute knowledge and enlightenment to our members."

"I also hope WACD can educate and inspire the younger generation to acquire knowledge sufficient to make political decisions at the highest level," he said.

Born in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Chris holds a B.A. in history from the University of Alberta and an LL.B. from the University of Toronto.

## WACD Schedule At-A-Glance



### 2018

- September 19 -- Executive Committee Meeting 3p
- October 17 -- Board Meeting 3p
- October 21 -- Dinner/Lecture Program 5p Thunderbird Country Club
- November 18 -- Dinner/Lecture Program 5p Thunderbird Country Club
- December 6 -- Porter WorldQuest Competition December 14 --
- Members Only Holiday Event

## 2019

- January 2 -- Executive Committee Meeting 3p
- January 13 -- Dinner/Lecture Program: America's Future in Space, Dr. Jonathan Clark 5p Thunderbird Country Club
- January 16 -- Board Meeting 3p
- February 10 -- Dinner/Lecture Program: China's Plan for Global Economic Supremacy, Michael Pillsbury 5p Thunderbird Country Club
- March 6 -- Executive Committee Meeting 3p
- March 10 -- Dinner/Lecture Program: The Coming Era of Autonomous Vehicles, Gary Silberg 5p Thunderbird Country Club
- March 13 -- Board Meeting 3p
- April 14 -- Dinner Lecture Program: Uncertainties and Peril in North Korea, Ken Gause 5p Thunderbird Country Club
- May 1 -- Executive Committee Meeting 3p
- May 15 -- Board Meeting 3p

All Board and Executive Committee meetings are held at the RAP Foundation Building, 41-550 Eclectic St., Palm Desert CA. Dinner/Lectures are held at Thunderbird Country Club.

[Read more about our events on the web site](#)

### **World Affairs Council of the Desert**

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