

Lifelong Learning

Renewal • Discovery
Community

AN ADVERTISING PUBLICATION OF THE HERALD-TRIBUNE MEDIA GROUP

FRIDAY, APRIL 20, 2007

What's it all about?

Here is a sample of the fabulous learning opportunities offered in the Sarasota/Manatee area. These organizations formed the workgroup that developed this publication, as well as a portal on the Sarasota County Library System's Web site – www.sclibs.net.

Adult & Community Education Center

The Adult & Community Education Center (ACEC), operated by the Sarasota School district, served more than 8,400 registrants last year. ACEC's mission is to provide dynamic and responsive lifelong learning opportunities to meet the changing needs of our community.



ACEC offers approximately 700 classes yearly throughout Sarasota County in art and music appreciation, crafts, dance, drawing, music, painting, photography, political science, self-improvement, cuisine, history, literature, digital camera and more. Classes range in length from one to 10 sessions. Tuition varies. Classes are offered year-round during the day and evenings, with some weekend classes.

Contact: Jeanne Goble or Laura Trubac
1086 S. Shade Ave., Sarasota • 941-361-6590
www.ace-sarasota.com

Elderhostel School of Lifelong Learning

Elderhostel is a continuing education program for adults age 55 plus. Students come together as a group of individuals who share a common passion for the love of learning.



Subjects include: Asolo Theater, Sarasota Opera, various cultures, art, music, history, litera-

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TOP: LEARNING IS A "WORKOUT" FOR THE BRAIN.
BOTTOM: NANCY SCHLOSSBERG IS AN EXPERT IN TRANSITIONS, LEARNING AND MORE.

The Key to Happiness

An Interview with Nancy K. Schlossberg

According to a recent article in The New York Times, Americans' retirement life stage may actually be longer than their work life stage. What does this mean as we enter later stages of life? While many focus on the financial end of our future, experts are saying that with longer life expectancy, it is also crucial to plan for the psychological and physical aspects of aging.

Research shows that one of the best ways to keep limber psychologically is through learning. Few know this better than Nancy K. Schlossberg, Ed.D, the

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A letter from the Lifelong Learning Action team

From Ashes To Dances

"The 'Y' is my wonderland," says Edith Jacobs. What is wonderful about the YMCA? For one, the group exercise classes. Edie, as she likes to be called, has taken aerobics, tai chi, yoga, line dancing and Zumba – a Latin music-themed dance program.



But that is not all. Edie has found rich, new friendships at the Sarasota Family YMCA through the Spirit, Mind & Body University classes taught by the county's Adult Continuing Education program at the Frank G. Berlin, Sr. Branch. There she has also taken classes about film, computers and art appreciation. More importantly, Edie has formed bonds with a large group of friends.

"These friendships are very important to me at the Y. I've opened up myself in every way," Edie says.

This is a wonder, considering she was a Jewish child in Germany when the Holocaust and WWII shattered her world. Edie turned inward to books after arriving in America, and as an adult she threw herself into growing two successful retail stores in the Bronx, New York. "I have had nothing but work in my life," she says. "I started as a peddler in Harlem."

Now Edie is trying and learning all kinds of new things and having a ball. "I have come out of myself. I even joined a senior theatre group and have taken over as program chair for the Prime Timers, a singles group for over-60s," she adds.

"The brain is continually resculpting itself in response to experience and learning"

- Dr. Gene Cohen

Dear Reader,
Welcome! We represent residents and organizations that care deeply about our community and that have a passion for living a full life. We've created this publication to help spread the word about the incredible variety of lifelong learning opportunities available for adults in Sarasota and Manatee Counties. We want to connect you to programs and organizations that catch your interest, and inspire you to seek opportunities to expand your mind, or learn a new skill!

Research tells us that as we get older our capacity to learn doesn't diminish. Dr. Gene Cohen talks about the positive power of the aging brain in *The Mature Mind*. He states that research over the past 20 years shows us that "the brain is continually resculpting itself in response to experience and learning." Also, new brain cells do form throughout life.

Learning can benefit us in many ways - physically, intellectually, emotionally, spiritually and socially. As you read through these pages you will connect to folks who are in the thick of learning and loving it.

So what do you want to learn? Kayaking? History of modern art? Classic oil painting? Internet tips for your business? Xeriscaping your garden? The digital revolution? A good place to start is the website of the Sarasota County Library System where we created a portal to learning organizations (www.sclibs.net – click on the hot button for Seniors on the right.) This list links to a dozen organizations in the area offering something for everyone.

In closing, we thank SCOPE for bringing our voices together through its focus on Aging: The Possibilities. SCOPE's role as a convener and facilitator has helped us determine how we can contribute to the community in a way that matters to each of us.

Happy learning,

Members of the Lifelong Learning Action Team
Aging: The Possibilities



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author of *Retire Smart, Retire Happy: Finding your True Path in Life*. A resident of Sarasota, Schlossberg is an expert in the areas of adult transitions, retirement, career development, adult learners and intergenerational relationships.

Q. You were researching adult transitions and the value of education in the 1960s. Have the reasons people seek out education changed in those 50 or so years?

In those days the triggers were transitions: divorce, career changes, family changes. Today, people who go back to school in their 30s and 40s go for career change, for advancement and for self-fulfillment. For retirees, or partially retired people, education serves a different purpose: it is a way to be intellectually stimulated, to meet other people and interact. In many ways it is a good substitute for work.

Q. How do you define lifelong learning?

I think the impetus to learn something new, whether organized or informal, whether you are being challenged, or challenging yourself – is a quest to see the world in a different way, to learn something new and to stretch yourself and your horizons.

Q. What are the benefits of this kind of educational pursuit?

Learning serves many purposes. First, it is a connecting link to others. But it is also a way to stretch the mind. The more you exercise the mind, it is like strengthening your body – you can strengthen your synapses. It is preventative and good for you.

Also, I have found that when people retire they miss feeling that they matter, that they are appreciated, that what they do makes a difference. Educating themselves and volunteering helps them get up in the morning. It gives them a sense that they belong and they make a difference.

Q. But all retired people can't be the same. Can you categorize some of the different kinds of retirees?

I have identified six types of people who emerge during retirement. They are:

Continuers. These people continue, in a modified form, the skills and activities they did before, but modify them to fit retirement, through volunteering or part-time work in their former field.

Adventurers. They do something entirely different, start new activities or learn new skills not related to their past work, like a researcher who becomes a massage therapist.

Easy gliders. They let the day unfold with no agenda. They baby-sit grandchildren or visit friends. They like their daily schedule to 'go with the flow.'

Involved spectators. They stay interested in their previous field of work but change the form, like a lobbyist who can no longer walk the halls of congress but is still a news junkie, or a retired museum director who is still involved in the art world.

Retreaters. These people become depressed or simply couch potatoes. They retreat from life and give up on finding a new path.

Searchers. Something comes to an end and they start searching for something new. They learn by trial and error and have yet to find their identity in retirement.

The point is all of us will be searchers at one time or another. The lifelong learning is a prod – a way to help us search for new things and new ways of being in the world, which can be very exciting.

Never Be Bored Again!

"Ignorance is the curse of God, knowledge the wing wherewith we fly to heaven." – Henry VI

That William Shakespeare quote exemplifies W. Ranier Kroll's feelings about lifelong learning.

"Knowledge is its own reward," says Ranier – an instructor and board member of the Adult & Community Education Center.

But there are other gifts from learning. For example, Ranier, who has a B.A., M.A., Ph.D., and a law degree – turned to Spanish. While attending a language school in Guatemala, he learned about Nuestros Pequeños Hermanos – an orphanage in South and Central America. Since then, for six years, he has been visiting for three months at a time, translating the letters children write to their patrons. "When I leave they thank me, but I am the one who should thank them," he says.

Learning has not only changed Ranier's life: it has made his life. "It makes me happy. I sit surrounded by my thousands of books, and I say 'this is my world,' I am never bored."



Optimal Aging

An Interview with Kevin W. O'Neil

How can I age well? That central question is on the minds and in the hearts of most people – young and old. Local expert and author Kevin W. O'Neil, MD, FACP, took the question one step further and then answered it: He is co-editor and contributing author of the *Optimal Aging Manual*, which Art Linkletter called "the great master book for the boomers." Dr. O'Neil is currently the Optimum Life Medical Director for Brookdale Senior Living, and a member of the Board of Directors of the Institute for Optimal Aging, a nonprofit foundation created by Brookdale to promote research and education in senior wellness issues.

Q. You are a proponent of the Six Dimensions of Wellness. Tell us about that.

First, let's start with wellness, which was defined by the President's Council on Fitness and Sports in 2001 as a multidimensional state of being describing the existence of positive health in an individual as exemplified by quality of life and a sense of well-being.



The six dimensions of wellness are: physical, social, intellectual, emotional, spiritual, and purposeful or occupational. What this means is whole-person wellness is not just the health of the body, but also the mind, heart, and soul. It is our relationships and our sense of optimism and meaning.

Q. What does the research and evidence show in regard to these six dimensions?

Research is confirming that physical fitness and intellectual stimulation can reduce the risk for Alzheimer's disease and other dementias in later life. Humor can help improve our emotional state and even has positive effects on immune function (People who are depressed are more susceptible to common colds!). Spirituality has been generally shown to have a positive impact on health outcomes as well.

Wellness also is related to our relationships. In fact, research has shown that social interaction is a more potent predictor of longevity than age, medical conditions, or even cigarette smoking. Having a sense of purpose and meaning or fulfillment in one's work can actually contribute to longevity. We all need a reason to get up in the morning.

The dimensions of wellness are not isolated from one another. What happens in one dimension influences the others. For example, regular physical activity such as walking can have important benefits for our body, but can also lift us up emotionally. Endorphins released in response to exercise can help relieve pain. Regular walking and especially ballroom dancing may reduce the risk for dementia.

Q. *How does lifelong learning fit in to "optimal aging?"*

Lifelong learning is an important aspect of optimal aging and wellness. The old adage is true: "Use it or lose it." Just as a muscle shrinks and weakens when it is not used, so also will the function of the brain deteriorate if it is not used. We are now learning that the brain is a lot more resilient in older age than was previously thought. Learning a new language, taking classes, or learning to play a musical instrument can stimulate the brain to use new

connections. We can preserve and enhance our cognitive performance. In fact, there are many examples from history of individuals whose creative gifts were revealed in their later years.

Q. *What prescription about lifelong learning would you give to older adults?*

Fred Astaire once said, "Old age is like everything else. To be good at it, you've got to start young." Although the sooner we start engaging in activities and programs that support all the dimensions of wellness, it is never too late to start. So, the message is...get going. Move your body, stimulate your brain, associate with people who make you feel good about yourself and move away from those who don't, have a sense of humor and a positive attitude, have a sense of gratitude, and find something that gives you a sense of meaning and purpose.

“Lifelong learning programs are key to healthy aging. Learning a new language, creative activities like painting, writing, wood-carving and ballroom dancing help our brains stay younger, and slow the aging process. Mind aerobics, exercise and fitness courses are among our most popular offerings.”

– Jane Icely, Director of Programs, Senior Friendship Centers

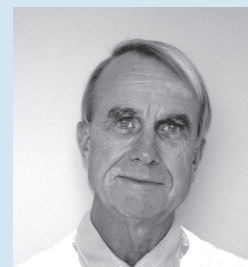
Adventures in Enrichment

Axel Lohrish's adventures in enrichment have been incremental.

"After I retired I increasingly felt the need to learn," he explains. "My objective was to fill a void in terms of intellectual enrichment." For the past three years, the USF Academy For Lifelong Learning has filled that space for Axel. "I have a broad range of interests and have taken classes in psychology, world affairs, law, physiology and evolution," he says.

One special area of interest for Axel is that of daily life under dictatorships. "I have lived under more than one, including East Germany, Cuba and Central Asia." His studies and self-study have helped him explore this theme.

The benefits to all this, aside from "thinking about stuff, opposed to just playing golf?" Axel says, "the stimulation comes not just from being in class, listening to experts. A lot comes from being with highly intelligent and well-educated people who have an interest in learning."



ture and spring training baseball.

Local hostellers (commuters) may attend Elderhostel programs for a deeply discounted price. Live at home during the week while attending classes and field trips. Programs run December-April.

Contact: Lynne Anast, Elderhostel Program Director
Senior Friendship Centers Inc.
1888 Brother Geenen Way • 941-955-2122
www.seniorfriendship.com • www.elderhostel.org

Manatee Community College, Corporate and Community Development Division

Manatee Community College (MCC) is an accredited two-year college serving Manatee and Sarasota counties. The area's first public institution of higher education, MCC was established in 1957 and charged with offering a university parallel curriculum; providing for vocational-professional courses; and providing a program of continuing education for adults.

The Corporate and Community Development division serves all ages with quality, low-cost, noncredit courses in continuing and community education, workforce solutions, traffic safety and small business development. Classes are offered year-round at MCC locations in Bradenton, Venice and Lakewood Ranch; at public and private sector sites; and online. Visit www.mccfl.edu/CCD for schedules.

5840 26th Street West, Bradenton • 941-752-5203
7131 Professional Pkwy. East, Sarasota • 941-363-7000
8000 S. Tamiami Tr., Venice • 941-408-1412



Pierian Spring Academy

Established in 1998, the Pierian Spring Academy is a free standing, nonprofit adult academic education program providing quality, low-cost, noncredit courses for persons of all ages regardless of educational background. Courses cover content from the humanities, sciences, and the arts and are taught by qualified academicians and recognized experts. The Academy offers these courses and related lectures during the fall and winter. Classes meet for two hours per week during the daytime hours and vary in length from four to 12 weeks.

Contact: Robert V. Carlson, Ed.D., Executive Director.
941-716-2471 • www.PierianSpringAcademy.org



Pierian Spring Academy
a special place to exercise the mind

Sarasota County

Sarasota County Government provides adult learning experiences through its employees, volunteers and partnerships, at various locations. Many of the classes and events are free.

The eight County libraries offer classes and programs and serve as venues for special-interest clubs and community groups. Sarasota County Parks and Recreation organizes and/or hosts programs dedicated to fitness and fun. Sarasota County Natural Resources leads nature walks year-round. University of Florida-Sarasota County Extension faculty and staff offer classes in landscaping, hurricane protection, nutrition and more. The Sarasota County History Center leads field trips about local history, architecture and historic preservation. Sarasota County Neighborhood Services hosts Civics 101, an intensive course in citizenship held twice a year. The Office of Community Involvement helps volunteers put their expertise to work and learn new skills while helping others.

941-861-5000 • www.scgov.net



Sarasota Institute of Lifetime Learning (SILL)

SILL is a not-for-profit, volunteer organization sponsoring lecture series on music, contemporary policy issues, and international is-



sues, plus international seminars. Speakers are from universities, think tanks, and the Foreign Service. Lectures are held January through March in Sarasota and Venice and attract well-informed, intellectually active senior citizens. 2007 attendance exceeded 21,000. Both series tickets and individual lecture tickets are available at very reasonable prices. Requests for the 2008 brochure, expected in early November 2007, can be made through the website or by phone.

1001 Boulevard of the Arts, Sarasota • 941-365-640 • www.sillsarasota.org

Senior Friendship Centers

Senior Friendship Centers has been providing programs and services to enrich the quality of life and health for persons 50 years of age and older since 1973. Our centers are among the first five in the state to be accredited by the National Institute of Senior Centers. We offer courses ranging from conversational Spanish and Italian to ceramics, woodcarving, creative writing, computers, pine needle weaving, yoga, hula, Latin dancing, mind aerobics and more. We have live bands Monday through Friday. No membership fees are required, but donations are encouraged.

1888 Brother Geenen Way, Sarasota • 2350 Scenic Drive, Venice

941-955-2122 • www.seniorfriendship.com



"People Helping People"

USF Sarasota/Manatee Academy for Lifelong Learning



The USF Sarasota/Manatee Academy for Lifelong Learning, which will begin its 9th summer session on June 4, 2007, is a community of learners enriching their lives through education. The learners and the teachers design the courses – which cover a wide range of subjects – according to their needs and interests. The philosophy of the Academy is to enable lifelong learners to pursue intellectual interests while fostering social and intellectual bonds. The Academy offers four sessions: Summer, June 4-July 26; Fall, Oct. 1-Dec. 6; Winter, Jan. 15-Mar. 6; Spring, Mar. 10-May 1.

8350 N. Tamiami Trail • 941-359-4296 • www.sarasota.usf.edu/academy

Lifelong Learning - Other Opportunities

Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH)

941-351-7933 • www.asalh.org

Grapevine International Folk Dancers of Sarasota

941-351-6281 • gvduurn@earthlink.net

The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art (Spotlight Series/Cultural Institute for Adults)

941-358-3180 • www.ringling.org

Longboat Key Center for the Arts

941-383-2345 • www.lbkca.org

The Ringling School of Art and Design (Continuing Studies and Special Programs)

941-955-8866 • www.ringling.edu

Sarasota Family YMCA

941-955-8194 • www.sarasota-ymca.org

Temple Beth Sholom (Adult Education Program)

941-955-8121 • www.templebethsholomfl.org

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Venice (Adult Growth & Enrichment)

941-485-2105 • www.uuvenicefl.homestead.com

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