

## Comments Summaries

**Dr. Jeffrey Gedmin**  
**The Next Germany**  
**Sarasota 01/11/22**

Attendance: 103

# evaluations received: 52 (50.5%)

# including comments: 8

### **Positive Comments: re: Speaker and Materials**

- would love to hear more on the immigrants and emigration in different sized cities
- bullet point effective
- much better at answering questions during Q&A

### **Potential Areas for Improvement re: Speaker Performance and Materials**

- Speaker spent too much time on his resume and not on the topic. (+1) Would thought that speaker should have spent more time on present German state and relations with other countries. I did not learn any new information (+1)
- Second question was more of a long speech....need better control so the rest of the audience does not tune out
- He took too long to make a point of any kind
- Too verbose in introduction. Too much personal information not germane to topic (+2). Somewhat shallow level of information
- He is an academic and not able to bring it home
- One of the most boring SILL speakers I have heard
- The speaker's voice was irregularly modulated, so there were times when he was barely audible

**Thomas DeFrank**

**Stories That Never Made It Into Print: Backstairs at the White House**

**Venice 1/15/22**

Attendance: 155

# evaluations received: 42 (27%)

# with comments: 11

**Positive Comments:**

-One of the best SILL lectures we've attended

-Excellent"

-The best!! Can't wait to read his book

-Very Informative

-Enjoyed every minute

-I could always hear him very well

-Excellent Presentation

-Informative, humorous and well presented

-Very interesting topic and presented with class

**Potential Areas of Improvement:**

I wonder why he didn't mention Trump or Biden

Needs to include more current stories

Too much Gerald Ford, not enough about others-especially the more current presidents

**Other:**

Please have a storage wall for cell phones. Do not allow them in the room!

**Dr. John Sinnott**  
**Biological Weapons: The Unseen Casts a Shadow**  
**Sarasota 01/19/22**

Attendance: 76

# evaluations received: 52

# included comments: 13

**Positive Comments re: Speaker and Materials**

–Excellent topic

–A little scary. Not a subject I know anything about. But because it was so scary I had a hard time I had a hard time separating it from conspiracy. One of the best presentations

–Area I knew very limited knowledge, important to Scary!!!

–Obviously this person is prepared.

**Potential Areas for Improvements re: Speaker Performance and Materials**

-Too technical in parts

–Not crazy about the presentation done by video. Sometimes hard to hear--- words helped (meaning the underlying script)

–Trouble hearing at times. Medical student talked too fast.

–This presentation was a perfect example of death by powerpoint. Get rid of static slides and show the speaker

**Comments regarding SILL, technology, logistics, sound, lighting, etc**

–presentation hindered by technology (+1)

–work out zoom details better

–remote lecturer not a good way to present a lecture like this

-Please work out AV problems prior to meeting

-SILL should invite this speaker to return in the next two years, in person

**Brian Hook**  
**Making Peace in the Middle East**  
**Sarasota 01/20/22**

Attendance: 137

# evaluations received: 62 ( 45.2% )

# with comments 11

**Positive Comments re: Speaker Performance and Materials**

–excellent lecture

–re: speaker returning in two years “maybe re: why he's left Imam Dul”

–excellent lecture---thorough, well organized. (+1). Certainly the press had neglected to report the success of the Abraham Accords. BEST EVER

–extraordinarily interesting topic—an insider's view, enlightening.

–First hand experience speakers always seem the most interesting to me. SILL would do well to recruit as many as possible of these first hand people.

–Politically, I'm probably at opposite ends from speaker but I thought he and his talk were thoughtful, well-grounded, informative and extremely good. I did learn things. I'd invite him back. (+1 )

**Potential Areas for Improvement re: Speaker Performance and Materials**

–Felt he was too political

–Would have liked to see a PP with bullet points of main message

–Hook was too biased towards Trump and Kushner. He should have left his opinion out of the discussion. Do not invite him back.

## **Amb. Richard Jones**

### **Energy Transition: Is it Feasible? What Will it Entail?**

**1/25/22 Sarasot & Venice**

Attendance: 121 Sarasota/108 Venice – Total 229

# of Evaluations Received: 24 Venice/53 Sarasota – Total 77

#Included Comments: 15

#### **Positive Comments:**

- He seemed much more dynamic and energetic in the Q&A
- Speaker was the best so far (3rd person). I learned something. Thanks.
- Brilliant expert – so knowledgeable.
- Q&A much better than talk
- Great topic” (2 commented)
- Excellent talk...poor delivery

#### **Potential Areas of Improvement:**

- Visual aids would have helped tremendously” (2 commented)
- Less statistics more effectiveness of methods”
- The presentation was an injustice to its importance”
- The speaker put the audience to sleep”
- Dissertations can be read in the library for free...not charged for a the door”
- Not a great presenter”
- Invite speaker back in about 3 yrs.” (not 2 yrs.)
- Enjoyed the lecture, but felt the speaker could have done a better job on his delivery
- The speaker read from a prepared text, which was a rather drone-like, anaesthetizing delivery
- He used a lot of acronyms that were hard for the listener to follow.”
- Don’t like speakers who read presentation
- Talk was a bit dry
- Speaker lacked enthusiasm
- Would have liked to hear about costs of renewables, especially as it relates to long term, i.e. costs of disposing or recycling solar panels, wind turbines, lithium batteries plus risks of carbon capture to the planet
- Sort of boring to me
- Mr. Jones talked too fast and should not have read his entire speech. Otherwise, good topic
- Very dull style of presenting.”
- Please only book speakers who are good speakers, as well as subject mater experts

## **Judge Charles Schudson**

### **Independence Corrupted: How America's Judges Really Make Decisions**

**1/27/22 Lakewood Ranch**

Attendance: 97 Lakewood Ranch (72%)

# of Evaluations Received 70 Lakewood Ranch

#Included Comments 7 (10%)

#### **Positive Comments:**

- The judge was a very dynamic speaker
- Passionate, articulate, focused, organized, charismatic and well-researched.
- Six characteristics essential for SILL presenters and any good teacher
- A liberal (Democrat) very good – but need someone on the other side
- What is the name of his book available on Kindle?
- Please send his contact info.”

#### **Potential Areas of Improvement:**

- Book sales? Little pushy

**Dr. Robert McClure**  
**Modern Misunderstandings of American Government and Politics**  
**Sarasota 02/08/22**

Attendance:

# evaluations received: 85

# with comments: 12

**Positive Comments**

- McLure is excellent speaker. Would be ideal if we had his presentation, his words, on the screen! Hard to catch everything
- The speaker was excellent but the topic rather vague
- Really good”.
- Looking forward to Dr. McLure's upcoming book

**Potential Areas for Improvement**

- Would like close captions----speaker's voice dropped and was difficult to hear at times
- Spoke a bit too long
- The speaker should have been reminded to speak directly into the microphone. His voice trailed off frequently
- Talk was too esoteric...had a hard time figuring out what his central thesis was....if there was one. His concluding sentiments highly pie in the sky...and unrealistic. Given the setting, his talk could have been shortened and presented as a Sunday sermon (+1)
- I wish he had not read his speech (+ 1)
- Wish you would use “close captions” as you did in 2019

## **Amb. Charles Ray**

### **Topic: US Military Presence in Africa: The Limits of Engagement**

**Sarasota: 02/23/22**

Attendance: 68

# evaluations received: 49

# with comments: 10

#### **Positive Comments**

- Ambassador Ray was a wonderful speaker
- Excellent speaker
- Extremely effective. Sophisticated, understanding and good communication
- Good inside information
- Very articulate, covering a difficult subject with intelligence.
- Would like to hear a more full view on China/ Russian influence on the African continent
- Well spoken, clear, good tempo, clear enunciation.
- Speaker is well heeled in this topic. More of him would be more info on a topic not very familiar to many Americans

#### **Potential Areas for Improvement**

- The subject matter was not current. Examples from his career 15-20 years ago
- Africa needs to be discussed by a speaker who is more aware of today's issues in Africa. What should the US be doing in Africa
- Talked too much
- give another answer to question
- Too long on one question
- This is standard speak. This speaker is talking down to the audience. These are his memories and opinions. [This attendee claims to have worked in Africa for years.]

**Gen. Russel Honore**  
**Military Support to Civil Authorities**  
**Venue 03/01/22**

Attendance: 99

# evaluations Received: 47 (47.5%)

# with comments: 12 (25.5%)

**Positive Comments:**

- Wonderful, Timely
- Excellent (3 responded)
- Maybe something different (Response to question #2)
- Bring him back
- Please have him back
- Fantastic Speaker

**Potential Areas Of Improvement:**

- Time management needed to give questions their opportunity too
- Difficult to understand him
- Out dated/not relevant
- All about his ego/All about himself
- He likes talking a lot
- I expected a typical session. I got a rousing speech extolling the General

## **William Davison**

### **Ethiopia and its Prime Minister/From Nobel Laureate to War Crimes**

**Sarasota 03/08/22**

Attendance: 64

# evaluations received: 35 (55%)

# with comments: 6

#### **Positive Comments:**

– the speaker definitely has deep understanding of the topic

#### **Potential Areas for Improvement:**

– Talk too technical. Ethiopia not prominent in US News, so following events and ethnic problems difficult

– Answers too long to follow

– I'm not very aware of the politics or even the history, culture of the area. Much more information on background of this area re: daily lives, ways of life, culture, religion would have added needed context for me."

– More use of readable maps, photos, bios of various leaders would have kept my interest. I may be in the minority in the SILL group

– Very windy in his responses

– He didn't announce his topic and major points he wished to cover. Therefore, I felt his lecture was confusing. With his accent, I feel a need was necessary to make his terms better defined clearly and literally. He's not a good speaker.

He obviously knows his subject well, but as a former public speaking teacher on the college level, better organization would be advised.

– It would have been helpful if the map of Ethiopia continued to be displayed.

- Boring subject

#### **Comments regarding SILL: technology, logistics, sound, lighting, etc.**

– Acoustics here are poor for people with hearing problems

#### **Other:**

Recommendations for subjects to address for future lectures:

1. More about Russia
2. Global warming
3. Economy
4. Is the stock market rigged?
5. Is the United Nations effective or useless?
6. More on outer space.
7. Discussion of UFO's
8. China relations with Taiwan.

9. Is online gambling hurting our economy?
10. Should presidential elections be decided only by a popular vote?
11. Should the Supreme Court justices serve a set term?
12. Is the US gov't spending more on other countries and not enough on our own problems?
13. Is the US using enough of our own oil?

**Peter Bergen**  
**Domestic Extremism**  
**Venice 03/18/22**

Attendance: 212

# evaluations received: 50 (23.5%)

# including comments: 13 (26%)

Bergen's Presentation

The comments of two attendees were not included in this report since 2 were directed at Robert Lierber presentation----"My comment relates to speaker on 3/11. Friday lecture (Venice) speaker Robert Lieber. "His topic was well covered, however, the speaker read his entire presentation. Not Acceptable". "Very poor." The other comment was related to Professor Milani presentation---"it is almost impossible to understand Professor Milani, year after year. He has good info.

**Positive Comments:**

- Good Information
- Excellent ()
- Tense

**Potential areas of Improvement:**

- Poor diction/articulation (9)
- Slides would have been helpful
- His delivery was confusing

This comment written by one of the attendees sums up the poor diction/articulation issue -"I'd not like to criticize SILL speakers. They are all good. However, while this speaker was certainly very qualified to speak about domestic terrorism. I could not understand his words too often to appreciate what he was saying. Maybe a large part of my problem is my own hearing. I do have hearing aids and I usually do not have this problem. I think it was the speaker's style of talking. I think a different speaker would be very good for next SILL session".

**Other Comment:**

CNN has never been correct or truthful about anything. They are ruining the country with their false woke narrative. This is a great unbiased America being led astray by the white elite and educators who don't believe we have a constitution.

**Stephen Biegun**  
**Negotiating with North Korea**  
**Sarasota & Venice 03/22/22**

Attendance:

Location:

# evaluations received: 77

# including comments: 15

**Positive Comments:**

- Excellent! (4)
- The subject should definitely be addressed in next year's series
- Outstanding (2)
- Invite him back!
- Great full 50 minutes
- No political swipes right or left
- Very Good!!!
- Best ever!
- Great talk

**Further comments:**

- Apologist for a failed strategy
- In response to *SILL should invite this speaker to return in the next two years* the comment was Yes and No. Yes, because he is such a dynamic speaker. No, because it would be instructive to hear another speaker on the same important topic.

**Evan Feigenbaum**  
**Why America No Longer Gets Asia**  
**Venice March 24, 2022**

Attendance: 155

Number of evaluations received: 58

Number including comments: 11

**Positive Comments:**

- Mr. Feigenbaum was very knowledgeable!
- Very informative and Interesting.
- Fantastic Speaker
- Outstanding. Addressed the democracy question!
- Very well prepared and organized.
- Great!
- Mr. Feigenbaum is very interesting, but talks to fast.

**Further comments regarding speaker:**

- Spoke too quickly, sometimes hard to understand.
- Spoke too fast and mumbled a bit. Hard to distinguish his points.
- A little hard to understand him as well as other speakers. They seem to drop their voices at end of some sentences.
- Recommend speaking with a clearer voice - tends to tail off quickly at tend of sentences.
- Funny voice - hard to understand.

**Further comments regarding SILL:**

- I suggest a map of the world or area discussed to be on the screen rather than the SILL brochure.

**Suggested topics for the future:**

- What About South America? Asia is becoming more cohesive. Africa has huge economic ties with Europe and China.
- Trade agreements
- Concerned about education of our children.
- Education in academic sense - narrow views in US
- Is the US doing anything with our closest neighbor in the southern hemisphere.

**Thomas Nichols**

**Our Own Worst Enemy: The Global Assault From Within on Modern Democracy  
Sarasota 03/29/22**

Attendance: 137

# of Evaluations Received 44 (32%)

#Included Comments: 8

**Positive Comments:**

- Excellent!
- Outstanding!
- Wonderful!
- One of the Best SILL has had!
- Both serious and entertaining!
- I love it when the main ideas are displayed on the screen!
- Outstanding speaker - have read both books. Thrilled SILL has brought him to Sarasota. Could be a Town Hall speaker as well.

**Potential Areas of Improvement:**

- Content contradictory and superficial.

## **Peter Singer**

### **Like War: How Social Media Has Become Weaponized, and What We Need to Know About it**

**Lakewood Ranch 03/31/22**

Attendance: 102

Number of evaluations received: 72 (71%)

Number including comments: 13

#### **Positive Comments:**

- Excellent! (5)
- Loved the graphics - he put a lot of effort in his talk and it was very informative.
- Dr. Singer is very informative and interesting. Please invite him back
- Best public speaker! Clear context backed by great slides. So many other speakers would drop their voices and we would lose a great deal of what they said. Also, excellent, pertinent topic!! It is not just about the subject, but how it is presented!!!
- Great
- Excellent! Our education system should be teaching this way - using real-time scenarios in our world - relate to past, present, future.
- Articulate, original research. Well organized with effective slides. Big picture view supported by details. Current.
- He was fantastic. The world has changed!

#### **Further comments regarding speaker:**

- Would appreciate more objective speakers! Peter is another obvious partisan!
- Singer's slide showing Jan 6 riot should also include a picture of Hunter Biden. Twitter, Facebook, Google impacted 2020 election by deliberately not reporting on contents of his laptop. The CDC has said that only N-95 masks are of value. SILL should not require mask wearing. Singer did not mention the impact of Facebook on 2020 election - "Zuchabucks"