

Join our team of OLLI volunteer instructors as we share our choices of Wonders of the World. Each session tells us something profound about the human experience in different times and places. (Subject to change, as needed.)

WEEK #.	TOPIC	INSTRUCTOR(S)
#1-a. Feb.5 10:45 to 11:30	Facts and fiction that created the legend of the Pony Express. This is the story of a business that should have been a minor footnote of history and how, in the last century and a half, it has become an important piece of history in the settling of the American West.	John Birkland
#1-b. Feb 5 11:30 to 12:15	Creation of the Great Lakes The Great Lakes of North America are the largest expanse of fresh water on the planet. Searching for clues of their formation, geologists delve deep and discover the secrets of the origins of the Great Lakes.	Vicky Birkland
#2-a & b Feb 12 10:45 – 12:15	The Marvels of the Panama Canal. Creating one of the greatest engineering wonders of the world linked the two great oceans of the world. Taking 10 years to build, the construction and influence of the Panama Canal changed the world in so many ways.	Heidi Fanning And John Birkland
#3-a Feb 19 10:45 – 11:30	Rebuilding Notre Dame The Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris, built in the 13 th century is an icon of the highest craftsmanship of the Medieval period. In 2019 it was gutted by a massive devastating fire. Since that time France has been researching and restoring this treasure to its original glory, to be reopened this year. PBS NOVA takes us inside to be a part of this amazing reconstruction.	Vicky Birkland
#3-b Feb 19 11:30 – 12:15	THE WHITE RAJAHS OF BORNEO: Sailing to Borneo in 1839 in search of adventure and fortune, Charles Brooke came to be known as the 'White Rajah' after helping the Sultan of Brunei crush a pirate rebellion and suppress piracy in the region. Having won the Sultan's gratitude, he was bestowed with the title 'Rajah of Sarawak,' whose dynasty ruled until the end of World War II.	John Birkland
#4-a. Feb 26 10:45 – 11:30	The WWII Doolittle Raid on Japan. Just 4 months after Pearl Harbor, at a point when American morale was at its lowest, a super-secret operation did what was thought to be impossible. On April 18, 1942, 16 aircraft and 80 men, launched from an aircraft carrier, struck the Japanese homeland and the city of Tokyo, greatly improving American morale and creating fear and panic in the Japanese population who had been told many times that the war would never touch them.	John Birkland
#4-b. Feb 26 11:30 – 12:15	Unveiling Subterranean Wonders: Crystal Caves. Trek far beneath our world to marvel at the giant crystals in the rare Crystal Caves of the world. Join these scientists to learn the evolution of crystals and witness Nature's stunning works of art.	Vicky Birkland
#5-a. MAR 5 10:45 – 11:30	The Impossibility of Hummingbirds. Hummingbirds are truly amazing in so many ways. Very recent research has revealed things that changed the scientific knowledge of these creatures. Come enjoy learning about these tiny Jewels of the Skies.	Vicky Birkland

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#5-b. Mar 5 11:30 – 12:15	Out of the Ashes: Recovering the Lost Library of Herculaneum. Buried by the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius in AD 79, over 2000 scrolls in a library in Herculaneum were burned to charcoal logs, unreadable – until now. With modern technology and medical imaging, scientists have “unrolled” and captured the writing of these 2000-year-old scrolls.	Vicky Birkland
#6-a. Mar 12 10:45 – 11:30	Riveting: The Story of Blue Jeans. No other American everyday item has influenced the world like blue denim jeans. Come along the path from its humble cotton birth in India and its mega-industry of indigo dye through its building of America, emerging in the 20 th century as a high-fashion must-have!	John Birkland
#6-b. Mar 12 11:30 – 12:15	Sainte Chapelle. Visit this stunning chapel (now a public monument) in Paris that has Gothic walls of stained glass – a masterpiece!	Vicky Birkland
SPRING BREAK	No Classes Spring Break	
#7-a. Mar 26 10:45 – 11:30	Virginia City, Nevada: America’s Old West Looking now like a stage set for a Western saga, Virginia City began with discovery of the Comstock Lode and brought magic wealth, elaborate saloons, and culture! Let’s explore its past, innovative technology in mining, and wild boomtown nature.	John Birkland
#7-b. Mar 26 11:30 – 12:15	Disney’s Magical Dream: Disneyland. Travel back with Walt Disney to discover how he turned his wildest dream into a reality that has brought joy to generations of families. Explore the ingenious engineering and construction that brought the world of animation to California.	Vicky Birkland
#8-a. Apr 2 10:45 – 11:30	Panama’s Indigenous Peoples. Panama is known internationally for its canal and its flora and fauna. Let’s take a look at its first, but mostly unknown, inhabitants.	Heidi Fanning
#8-b. Apr 2 11:30 – 12:15	Modern Man Goes Underwater and Underground. The Chunnel, Tunnels, and Underwater Highways: Can you dig it?	John Birkland
#9-a. Apr 9 10:45 – 11:30	The Colosseum: Engineering Marvel of Rome. Journeying to the Eternal City, we will examine this massive Flavian amphitheater, seeking its history, survival, and its majesty engineered to stand for over 2000 years.	Vicky Birkland
#9-b. Apr 9 11:30 – 12:15	Mt St Helens. In March of 1980 the ground around Mt. St. Helens in Southern Washington started to shake, and then she burped, and the Pacific Northwest went into panic mode. Would it blow; when would it blow and if so, how big would it be? Answers to all the questions and speculation came early Sunday morning, May 18, when 1300 feet of the top and the entire north side blew up and out, creating unbelievable devastation. In this class we will learn the reasons for the eruption, the amount of death and damage it caused, and the resurgence of the region over the past 40+ years.	John Birkland



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#10-a. Apr 16 10:45 – 11:30	THE LOUVRE - 800 YEARS OF ART AND ENGINEERING: In the centre of Paris stands a wonder of engineering - the Louvre. Now investigators are using new technology, including technical drones, to examine this monument to unravel the astonishing past life of the building. How did this building evolve from a small medieval castle into a marvel of modern engineering?	Vicky Birkland
#10-b. Apr 16 11:30 – 12:15	The USS Constitution and her sisters. The USS Constitution (Old Ironsides) is the oldest commissioned naval vessel still afloat, and she has been designated "America's Ship.". We will look at the ups and downs of her career since her launching in 1797, and the part she and her five sisters played in protecting our fledgling nation.	John Birkland B