

Scholar's



Volume XXIV, No. 3

November/December 2009

Batter Up

Saturday, November 14, 2009

Note: One Week Earlier Than Usual!!

1:30 p.m.

Room 111-A Chancellor's Complex, UCSD Campus
Program

Doc Noel, SDIS Member, Shortstop and
Promoter of Public Health

Doc Noel will speak about his recently published book, coauthored with Alan Alop: *The Best Team Ever - A Novel of America, Chicago, and the 1907 Cubs*.

A man of many interests, Noel is in his nineteenth year as the Chief Dental Program Consultant for the State of California. He advises the Department of Health Services on dental policy and quality assurance for the statewide Medicaid Dental Program (Denti-Cal). He is on the faculty at University of California San Francisco School of Dentistry; holds a lifetime appointment with California Community Colleges; and is adjunct professor at San Diego State University. His service includes American Dental Association spokesperson and consultant to the ADA Council on Dental Practice. Six terms as California Dental Association Public Health Representative attest to his enthusiasm for dental public health.

An author and professional speaker, he delivered the keynote address at the 125th Annual Session of the American Association of Dental Examiners, and has been recognized nationally for his diverse presentations: how to grow and maintain healthy teeth; tobacco cessation; design and administration of dental programs; health promotion; personal growth; organizational development; and, of course, baseball.

How did baseball get in there? Doc Noel was chosen to play shortstop for the 1959 and 1960 All Star Teams for the Skokie Indians Little League in Illinois. In 2002 he was elected to the National Adult Baseball Association (NABA) All Stars in Sacramento, California. He enjoys his career in health promotion, and continues to play, manage, watch – and write and speak about – baseball.



AT OCTOBER'S MEETING

Dr. Sanford A. Lakoff shared with SDIS a chapter he called “America as a State of Mind” from his forthcoming book *Contested Concepts: Ten Political Ideas that Shape the Modern Mind*. Dr. Lakoff earned his Ph.D. at Harvard in 1959 and came to UCSD in 1974 as Founding Chair of the Department of Political Science. He has authored many books and over 50 scholarly articles.

Dr. Lakoff opened his talk provocatively musing whether history is detrimental for democracy. It was soon clear that he thinks the opposite. He suggested, however, that American optimism tends to relish the future while diminishing the past.

The central thesis of his chapter then emerged. Whether we recognize the ancient threads or not, modern American democracy is an amalgam of strong historical forces: the individualism of British Natural Rights political theory, the pluralism of Roman Republican collectivism, and the communalism of the Athenian democratic polis. In 1831-32 De Tocqueville attributed the independence of American yeoman farmers to the absence of feudalism, a system they rejected.

His obvious command of history from Classical times through the present led Dr. Lakoff to conclude that our political thinking is shaped by all these forces, whether that shaping is conscious or not. The more recent Lockean individualistic liberty is no more powerful than the ancient Roman influence on the nation's founders. This shows, he argued, in our public “capitol” buildings, and our political vocabulary is filled with Latin derivatives, *e pluribus unum*, *novus ordo seclorum*. Roman history was a struggle between the Patrician and Plebian orders; and to prevent Caesar-ism, the founders sought to avoid factionalism. They even subordinated the military to the President and borrowed from Montesquieu, who promoted divided government to safeguard the liberty of the people.

From Athens the nascent nation adopted notions of citizenship and community. The Athenians also gave us concepts of loyalty to the community based on the principle of polis, the ancient Greek city-state. They instituted “artificial” tribes to contain the rivalries underlying unrest among the natural tribes of the coast, the plains, and the hills. The new tribes incorporated cohorts from each of the old rival tribes, not unlike the ethnic mixing of American society.

In American history Andrew Jackson leaned more toward the inclusiveness of Greek democracy over republicanism. The Athenian influence is also evident in the Gettys-

burg Address – “that these dead shall not have died in vain” – which can be compared directly with Pericles’ funeral oration for the fallen warriors as recorded by Thucydides in his history of the Peloponnesian War. Dr. Lakoff concluded that communalism implies that the state should not be a mere “night watchman” but an enabler.

Interesting discussion resulted from the question period. Dr. Lakoff believes that American history has so colored the popular consciousness that it is not necessary for people to know, for example, who Thomas Jefferson was or when he lived for their mindsets to be shaped by the Jeffersonian ideals. Based on this discussion of one chapter, Dr. Lakoff’s book, “*Contested Concepts: Ten Political Ideas that Shape the Modern Mind*,” should be stimulating and thought-provoking.

STUDY GROUPS

Works in Progress

Works-in-Progress is returning as a study group on **Friday, November 7th, from 1:00-3:00 p.m. at Pat Terry's home** in Poway. **Donna Boyle** will be presenting her short article, "Healthcare Dilemma: Legacies of Feudalism and Slavery." To receive a copy of the article, please call or email **Cathy Blecki**. Please RSVP to **Pat Terry**. **New members welcome!**

Thanks to the committee, **Harry Boyle, Jean Mayer, Patricia Terry, and Catherine Blecki**, whose effort and wisdom have made it possible to continue this seminal group.

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Colloquy Café

Colloquy Café will meet **Wednesday, November 18, 2009, 1:00–3:00 pm**, at the home of **Jean Mayer**, 8515 Costa Verde Blvd #1955. The topic for this conversation is *Power*. Please note the new venue. Contact Jean pcluddite@sbcglobal.net for further details.

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Literature

The Literary Group will meet on **December 11 at 10:30 a.m.** in the Valley Center home of **Marcus and Marian Klein**. Betty Cortus will lead the discussion on a selection of poems by Thomas Hardy. For the poems and other information, contact Harry Boyle at hhboyle28@cox.net.

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Science (aka Brain Study Group)

The **Science (aka Brain) Study Group** will meet on **Friday, November 6, 2009 at 3 pm** at Bea Rose's apartment to discuss Chapters 3 and 4 of Richard Feynman's book, [*The Pleasure of Finding Things Out*](#). For further information, please call Bea Rose at (858) 458 - 9263.



Member Matters

Ron Stadsklev spoke on Sunday, October 25, at the El Cajon Branch of the San Diego County Library. His topic: "What's happening in China that we don't hear about in the US?" Contact Ron ronstadsklev@cox.net if you missed his talk and are intrigued by the topic.

Jean Mayer wants to inform members of the [15th Annual San Diego Jewish Book Fair](#). Click the link for more information. She also brought to our attention the death of George P. Rigsby, husband of long time SDIS member Jeannette Rigsby. A quote from Mallarmé introduced the [news account](#) of his productive and full lifetime, "*Qui a su se faire aimé; Ne peut mourir tout à fait!*"

Willard Wells recently gave a lecture at UCSD entitled [Apocalypse When? Calculating How Long the Human Race Will Survive](#). He based the talk on his book by the same title, recently published by Springer in association with Praxis. Following is a link to an article that summarizes the lecture in a campus newsletter, [This Week @ UCSD](#). The full video is [here](#).

Judith Strupp Green offers an article about two members' activities:

Curious About Curators? By Judith Strupp Green

San Diego Independent Scholars has two anthropologist-curators in their membership who have joined forces to prepare the San Diego Museum of Man's next major exhibit. At different times, Grace Johnson and I each held the position Curator of the Latin American Collections at that institution. Grace Johnson retired two years ago and is curator emerita. I left my position in the early 70s to raise a growing family but stayed involved as a Research Associate and member of the Collector's Club.

In July we answered the Board of Trustees Chair Karen Berger's invitation to guest-curate an exhibit on costume. Aiming for a new contextual angle on the subject of dress and costume, we proposed the title "Costume: Identity and Power in the Americas." Full sized mannequins wearing regional, ceremonial or dance costumes will be installed with realistic photographic backdrops on one-half the main floor of the museum by early February 2010.

The impressive collection started over 50 years ago with Mexican indigenous costumes and has expanded to include dress from other parts of the Americas. Of course, only a selection of these beautiful costumes can be displayed at one time. We are well into the planning and labeling stage now. As the exhibit takes shape, I will update our progress with a short briefing in the monthly Scholars' Notebook.



From the President

In last April's issue of the Notebook we asked, "where are we going, and will we know when we get there?" The SDIS Development Task Force grew out of that question, and it produced the questionnaire you recently answered. Your replies emphasized the importance of social engagement as well as scholarship. We read frequent reiterations of phrases like "intellectual companionship, small study groups, interesting people."

Perfect timing. Our Holiday Party is coming up. Mark your calendars for Saturday, December 5, 2009. (Complete details on page 6.)

Here is your opportunity. Get to know people you've only seen across a crowded room, or whose name is the only thing you recognize. Visit people you seldom chat with; find out if you've enjoyed the same speakers; learn about their study groups, and what imaginary study groups you both might like join.

Invite a friend or two to join you at the party. Share our good fellowship with others.

Oh, yes, we will share with you a summary of survey results. And thanks to those of you who responded. Nearly a 50% return – not bad, but that means a few of you still need to make your voices heard.

-- Donna Boyle, October, 2009

January Meeting

The January meeting will be
Saturday, January 23, 2010.

The speaker and topic are still tentative and will be
announce when plans are set.

About SDIS

San Diego Independent Scholars (SDIS) supports unaffiliated writers and researchers and welcomes everyone who appreciates creative and intellectual activities in the humanities, science, and the arts. SDIS is a non-profit organization and an affiliate of the National Coalition of Independent Scholars.

Donna Boyle, President, dboyle101@cox.net

Scholar's Notebook is the newsletter of SDIS. Please send your news for the *Notebook* to **Jack Cumming**, the *Notebook* editor: jbcumming@aol.com or by mail to 2855 Carlsbad Blvd N116, Carlsbad, CA 92008. The deadline for submissions is the 25th of the month prior to publication date.

www.sdscholars.org



San Diego Independent Scholars Board of Directors
cordially invites you and your friends to attend the

Annual
HOLIDAY PARTY
Saturday, December 5, 2008
11:30 am to 2:30 pm

Carlsbad-by-the-Sea
Retirement Community
2855 Carlsbad Boulevard
760-720-4580

Luncheon Buffet
Salmon or Turkey
Including wine and non-alcoholic beverages

\$20.00 per person, members and guests

Deadline for Reservations
November 20
Make checks payable to SDIS
Also indicate your choice of salmon or turkey
Mail to Delina Halushka
7186 Tern Place
San Diego, CA 92011

Any questions call Marla Jensen
760-431-6822

Directions
Interstate 5 North to Carlsbad Village Drive Exit
West to Carlsbad Boulevard
North to 2855 (between Grand and Christiansen)
Park on the street around the building

