

Scholar's



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March 2010

Preparing Students for College at The Preuss School UCSD

Saturday, March 20, 2010

1:30 p.m.

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

Our speaker will be Scott Barton, Principal of The Preuss School UCSD, a middle and high school dedicated to providing intensive college-prep education for motivated low-income students.

Scott Barton was appointed principal of The Preuss School UCSD in 2008, after serving as acting principal for the preceding eight months and, for eight years prior to that, as Dean of Students. He was a founding faculty member of the school which is jointly chartered by UC San Diego and the San Diego Unified School District.

In announcing his appointment as principal, UC San Diego Chancellor Marye Anne Fox said, "Scott has dedicated 27 years to working as an administrator and teacher, and has shown great leadership and management skills during this time as acting principal... Collaboration has been the cornerstone of his leadership. He understands the mission of the school and has worked closely with the faculty, staff, students, parents and UC San Diego representatives in establishing strong management processes and communications with key stakeholders."

Mr. Barton has done much to restore integrity and credibility to the school after a grade tampering scandal. He received his MA in Education and administrative and teaching credentials from San Diego State University. Although his credential is in the area of social studies with a supplementary authorization to teach mathematics, he goes

beyond these core disciplines in promoting computer literacy, student government, and yearbook creation at the middle and high school levels.

He enjoys reading, bodysurfing and spending time with his family. And he has thoroughly enjoyed his ten years at The Preuss School UCSD, and looks forward to continuing to guide students through middle and high school, helping prepare them to be successful in college.



AT FEBRUARY'S MEETING

The Judicial Ideal and its Practical Implementation

Victor Ramirez is a gifted and accomplished attorney, jurist, and advocate for the public weal. He is also a member of San Diego Independent Scholars. We consider him a friend.

On Saturday, February 20th we got to see our friend, Vic, in a different light when he spoke with us about the Search for Justice in a Democratic Society, focusing in particular on the judicial system in California. Bea Rose introduced him and detailed his rise from a childhood in the Hollywood neighborhood of Los Angeles, through his completion of law studies (University of San Diego) and passing of the California Bar Exam in 1973, to his appointment by Governor Jerry Brown in July 1979 as a Municipal Court Judge in North San Diego County. He rose through the judicial ranks, assuming positions of ever increasing responsibility, until his retirement in 2003. Since then he has continued judicial deliberations as a mediator, arbitrator, and public advocate.

Judge Ramirez has a way with words that held his audience through his detailing of how the judiciary is organized, the strengths and weaknesses of the current system, the ultimate influence of the citizenry, and the challenges that judges face in avoiding bias. He characterized the life of a judge, who is bound to silence about most of his work, as almost like that of a monk: judges have to withdraw socially in order to remain impartial and to keep the appearance of impartiality. Of course, there is a political dimension to judicial appointments and to judicial elections, but judges seek to rise above politics in the deliberations that come before their courts.

Judge Ramirez then led us through a detailed synopsis of the criminal justice system and the measures taken to maintain fairness, despite the burdensome work load facing the courts and the need to decide cases expeditiously. In San Diego County alone there are about 2,000 felony cases a month and 25,000 misdemeanor cases. To cope with this challenge there are about 200 to 300 Deputy District Attorneys and fewer than 200 courtrooms.

Turning to Civil litigation Judge Ramirez dispelled the popular notion that the number of tort cases has been escalating. To the contrary, litigation has been relatively constant for the last 10 to 15 years, due principally to the increase in arbitration. He then explained that many large cases are consolidated so that a single proceeding can

join all of the plaintiffs and defendants. He pointed out that trial lawyers step in to command accountability when more direct government regulation falls short.

Our adversarial system contrasts, for instance, with the system in Italy in which the judge is an investigator. In our system it is the District Attorney's staff or the plaintiff's attorneys who conduct the investigation and bring charges or an action for tort relief. The judge is the impartial arbiter ensuring that the resulting hearing is conducted fairly.

Judge Ramirez closed by discussing the 5 to 4 decision of the Citizens United case, in which the Supreme Court ruled that corporations, too, have a right to free speech. This led one woman from the audience to comment that corporations should have a single vote as well since they are to be treated like quasi-human unnatural persons. The afternoon gave the audience a lively discussion as well as insight into the courts and adjudication as it operates in practice in 2010.



STUDY GROUPS

Works in Progress

Works-in-Progress will be meeting! On **Saturday, March 13, 2010 from 1:00 to 2:30 PM** Judy Ramirez will be presenting for feedback the script she's prepared for a 10-minute video that will be a part of her website, www.WordsAhead.org. The purpose of the video is to explain the importance of foundational literacy and to introduce users to the site's noncommercial innovative educational materials.

To accommodate all members, who live from Chula Vista to Carlsbad, the group will meet at a centrally located public library, **University Community Branch Library, 4155 Governor Drive, San Diego, CA 92122-2501**. The library has a room that non-profit groups can use. You will have to ask at the desk precisely where that room is.

Judy will distribute her script in advance of the meeting. Call her to be sure you receive a copy. If you plan to attend, please let Cathy Blecki know by email or phone.



Colloquy Café

The next **Colloquy Café**, on **Wednesday, March 17, 2010 at 1:30 PM**, will discuss the word: *Self-Deception*. Those who are interested in attending can contact Jean Mayer at pcluddite@sbcglobal.net.



Literature

The **Literary Group** will meet on **March 29, 2010 at 10:30 AM** at Cathy Blecki's home. Marcus Klein will lead a discussion of selected short stories by [Franz Kafka](#).



Science (aka Brain Study Group)

The Science (aka Brain) Group has chosen its next adventure in learning. They have decided to read [Gentle Bridges: Conversations with the Dalai Lama on the Sciences of Mind](#), edited by J. W. Hayward and F. J. Varela. This is a chronicle of the first in the series of conferences held by the Dalai Lama on "Mind and Life".

The Group will meet on **THURSDAY, March 11, 2010 at 3:00 PM** at Bea Rose's home. Visitors are welcome. For further information, please call Bea Rose (858) 458-9263. Please note the change in day which is for this meeting only.



National Coalition of Independent Scholars (NCIS) News

NCIS, newly an affiliate of the American Historical Association, plans to mount a program at the next annual AHA conference in Boston, January 6-9. If you and/or your colleagues would like to organize a panel or a roundtable, or to participate in an existing one, please contact Kati Lynn katalin100@gmail.com. Or ask Donna Boyle to forward correspondence.



From the President

My favorite harbinger of spring is back: the mockingbird that lives in my backyard. In spite of his having learned to sing cell phone ring tones, his return is welcome. As usual he signals a resurgence of energy and creativity: time to slough off the tired ways of winter.

Anticipating growth and change, the SDIS Nominating Committee is on the prowl. They are pursuing a slate of new officers and directors. Don't hide. When they come calling, welcome them with a broad, smiling "Yes."

Attendance at the last couple of general meetings exceeded our expectations, and "a good time was had by all" at those lively presentations. Next we look forward to a rousing discussion of education at the Preuss School. Don't miss out. Mark your calendars. See you March 20.

-- Donna Boyle, March, 2009

APRIL Meeting

SDIS member Delina Halushka will discuss her research in Latin America.
Saturday, April 17, 2010.

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