



**DISCOVER SDIS**  
san diego independent scholars

## SCHOLARS NOTEBOOK

October 2018

**Next Meeting: Oct. 20 at 1:30pm**

### **The Arab-Israeli Conflict**

The shortcomings of the two-state solution are becoming increasingly evident. A three-state confederation which includes Jordan could offer a lasting resolution.

To address these serious shortcomings, it is worth considering a broadening of the two-state solution into one that would unify three adjoining states. Israel, Palestine, and Jordan would be associated in a permanent alliance but remain independently sovereign.

In a three-state confederation of Israel, Palestine, and Jordan, borders would be recognized but permeable. At first blush, this proposal may seem naïve and impractical, if only because it would make the Jordanian regime a third party to what is already a complicated two-dimensional puzzle.

By brokering a tristate confederation, the next American president could claim even more of an historic achievement, this time as a benefactor of both Jews and Arabs and of our own and the world's peace.

Would there still be obstacles to overcome? Of course. But as Theodor Herzl, the founder of the political Zionist movement once said prophetically, "If you will it, it is no dream."

***Monthly meetings of SDIS are free and open to the public. A question/discussion period follows the talk. The Chancellor's Complex, on the UCSD Campus, is a low building opposite the Price Center Center at the end of Myers Drive, which runs north from Gilman Drive.***



### **About Our Speaker Sandy Lakoff**

SANDY LAKOFF is professor emeritus of political science at UCSD where he served as founding chair of the department.

A native of New Jersey, he earned his B.A. at Brandeis and his Ph.D. at Harvard.

Lakoff is the author, co-author, or editor, of over a dozen books. He has also published over 50 scholarly articles and book chapters.

A prize for the outstanding senior thesis in Political Science has been established in his honor. He has been awarded a Chancellor's Associates prize and was voted Outstanding Teacher of the Year by the students of UCSD's Warren College. In 2008 he was named Edward A. Dickson Professor Emeritus. In November 2018 he will be awarded the Revelle Medal by UCSD for his signal and continuing contributions to the development of the campus.

(Lakoff Bio Continued)

Prior to his retirement Dr. Lakoff was a Renaissance academician having had a profound influence on thinking in his field, on the development of Political Science and Social Sciences on the UCSD campus, and on the lives of his students and mentees. He has remained an active scholar and a highly sought after speaker in his retirement.

## **ZOOM TELECONFERENCING**

### **A New Technological Opportunity for SDIS**

Wouldn't it be nice if a study group could include some participants remotely from their homes? Zoom would allow that.

For example, if four members of a study group are attending a meeting, and there is a reasonably sized computer or TV screen available as well a TV camera (often built into a computer, tablet, or other device), then other members of the group could participate from their homes. At home they would also need a device with a screen and camera. Using the ZOOM app, people at the meeting will see a split screen with all the remote participants' faces showing. The remote participants, who will have also downloaded the ZOOM app, will see the room with the attendees at the meeting place, as well as each other. All can hear and see what is going on. When a remote participant speaks, his picture can become larger, so he can be seen more clearly. The interactions among all participants can be seamless. This would open the door to more participants who are far from the meeting place, or who find it difficult to travel, to actively participate in the meeting.

Thanks to the suggestions and strong advocacy of our own Jack Cumming, and his willingly spending time to demonstrate ZOOM to Alvin Halpern and Barbara Heckler, the Board is convinced that this possibility is worth pursuing. SDIS will soon be moving forward to accomplish that goal.

In order to do that, we first need to have an idea of the computer and or tablet devices that our members presently have. In particular who has a PC or I-mac computer with built in camera, and who has a tablet or other hand held device with a camera. Having a large screen is particularly important at the meeting place, since a number of people will have to see the screen. We will soon be sending out a questionnaire to the membership to help us assess the feasibility of such remote meetings for a substantial portion of our membership. We are also exploring getting some technical support to help assess needs and to provide set-up support for individuals for the project.

It should be noted that using ZOOM is not restricted to Study Group meetings, nor is ZOOM the only technological application of potential use to SDIS. As Jack Cumming has pointed out, technological applications could be of value to SDIS in a number of contexts. We hope to explore some of those as well.

*Alvin Halpern*

## Colloquy Café

There was no September meeting. Next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 17 at 1:30 to discuss "poetry."

## Culture One

At our September 13th, meeting, we completed our study of the second Harari book: Book One, "Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind" (cc. 2011); plus Book Two, "Homo Deus: A Brief History of Tomorrow" (cc. 2017). Adventurous, stimulating assignments with much learned via "Sapiens" coverage of the "Cognitive Revolution" thru the "Scientific Revolution" and "Deus" coverage of "Homo Sapiens Conquers the World" through "Homo Sapiens Loses Control". Quite an accomplishment. So, What Comes Next?

## General Relativity

Over the last several months, a small group of SDIS members have been meeting once a month at John Alexander's home to learn some General Relativity. To date SDIS participants have included Alvin Halpern, Jim Alexander, and Don Bamber. In addition, a guest (a physicist friend of John's) has participated. The group is by nature limited to those with a substantial math background and with a solid grounding in classical physics at the undergraduate level.

The book we are using is: Gravity by James Hartle (Addison Wesley). This is a book that works its way toward Einstein's Equations from the bottom up. Whatever can be deduced with limited mathematical structure is done first. Hartle develops the math as needed as he marches along. This approach had appeal because it is easier to see the physical phenomenon explained in simple and intuitive terms, without the weight of the whole formalism obscuring the

Contact Peter Lisbon at [plisbon@gmail.com](mailto:plisbon@gmail.com) for information about attending.

At our upcoming October 11th meeting, we will take stock of where we've been and where we wish to go with our study group. This means sharing ideas about topics we would like to cover and resources available for such study. Examples of such topics are "Artificial Intelligence" and "Shifts in Contemporary Policies". Aside from our ongoing "Study Group Members", we would welcome people interested in joining to our group.

For further information, email: [rosnersue@gmail.com](mailto:rosnersue@gmail.com)  
*Sue Rosner*

same. It has negative aspects, because you have to be careful that earlier assumptions indeed hold in the broader formalism, and there is an inevitable amount of hand waving – albeit it can all be ultimately demonstrated via the fuller formalism.

We are presently studying Chapter 9 (Schwarzschild Geometry). This Chapter presupposes the solution of Einstein's equations for a spherical mass distribution, and then derives observable things from the geometry. The following chapter then looks in detail at the observational verifications of the predictions deduced from this special, but very useful, solution to Einstein's equations.

While we are already deep into the book, anyone who has the needed background and is interested, is welcome to join. Our next meeting is on Tues., Oct. 30, in John Alexander's Home – so there is plenty of time for someone interested to play catch-up. (The first few chapters are a review of special relativity.). For more information: [alvin.halpern@gmail.com](mailto:alvin.halpern@gmail.com), or 619 756 6006.

*Alvin Halpern*

## Film

We will meet Wednesday, October 3 at 10 am to watch *Tracks*, a 2013 Australian drama based on a memoir of the same name by Robyn Davidson.

Robyn traveled with a dog and four camels from Alice Springs across 1,700 miles of desert to the Indian Ocean. She was accompanied by a National Geographic photographer. Although the film lacks in plot, the gorgeous cinematography makes it all worthwhile.

Our September film was *Gore Vidal: The United States of Amnesia*. The 2014 documentary traces his life from a privileged early childhood to his death in 2012 at 86, using archival footage. His grandfather was Thomas Gore, a United States Senator from Oklahoma, so Vidal's exposure to Washington and politics started at an early age when he acted as a Senate page. He was an intellectual, a pop culture icon, a

## Neuroscience

The next meeting of the Neuroscience Study Group is scheduled for Tuesday, October 16, 2018 at 2 pm in my apartment, #1909, at the Vi. Visitors are welcome but please call me to ensure seating arrangements.

The reading assignment is from Michio Kaku's "*The Future of The Mind*", chapter 13, p. 284-295, *The Mind As Pure Energy*.

writer, and a cynical political pundit. He wrote about the decadence of American political life. Many of his writings revolved around the possibilities put forth by the Founding Fathers and the discrepancies about what we got.

His 1968 political debates with William Buckley highlighted their vastly opposite views. The 2015 documentary *Best of Enemies* chronicles those debates.

He was considered ruthless in exposing lies. Right after 9-11, he said that "once the country is habituated to liars, it takes a generation to bring the truth back".

Vidal's proud proclamation of his homosexuality came at a time when it was considered scandalous. He entered a 53 year relationship with another male, and bragged that what made it work was because they didn't ever have sex together. The Book Editor of the New York Times refused to review any of his books because the homosexual theme of *The City and the Pillar*.

*Barbara Heckler*

If you enjoyed Kaku's fantasies, be prepared for even more as Kaku posits possible future travels in which humans control robotic missions through space and envisions supercomputers capable of sending and receiving huge amounts of data.

I had suggested that since Chapter 13 is short, we might want to read Chapter 14 as well. On reflection I think it would be best to try to understand Kaku's predictions with a second (and possibly a third reading) which he says is based on the laws of physics (physics he knows and we don't).

*Bea Rose*

## **Just Lunch**

Save the date: We'll meet Friday, October 12 at noon at Kaiserhof in Ocean Beach. This German restaurant has remained popular year after year and October is the perfect time to visit. You can read their menu at [Kaiserhof Lunch Menu](#). You'll receive an email about two weeks ahead of October 12 so you can make a reservation.

*Barbara Heckler*

## **Looking Forward**

### **General Meeting**

### **November 17, 2018**

Our November meeting will be held at the Vi, 8515 Costa Verde Blvd.

Our speaker will be Dr. Gary Jacobson. His talk will be about the 2018 mid-term elections. Dr. Jacobson spoke to SDIS at the Vi in November 2016 about the recent election of Donald Trump and drew a record crowd.

## **Supper With Scholars**

We are meeting on the first Thursday of each month, at 6 pm. Thus, we will meet next on Thursday, October 4. If you plan to attend, please RSVP, stating whether you are coming alone or bringing friend(s).

We meet at Humphreys La Jolla Restaurant, 3299 Holiday Court. Meals from the menu ([www.humphreyslajolla.com](http://www.humphreyslajolla.com)) are Dutch Treat. Group discussion is based on suggested topics that have particularly interested the attendees in the last month. If possible, we select a question that can be addressed from the viewpoints of various diverse areas of expertise.

*Dave Parker*

# SDIS CALENDAR

## Colloquy Café

No September Meeting  
Next Meeting  
October 17, 2018  
1:30 pm  
At the Vi  
Contact: M.E. Stratthaus  
[strattme@san.rr.com](mailto:strattme@san.rr.com)

## Culture One

October 11, 2018  
2:00 pm - 4:00 pm  
At the Vi - Signature Room  
Contact: Sue Rosner  
[rosnersue@gmail.com](mailto:rosnersue@gmail.com)

## Film Group

October 3, 2018  
10 am  
At Barbara's home  
Contact: Barbara Heckler  
[bheckler@san.rr.com](mailto:bheckler@san.rr.com)

## General Relativity

October 30, 2018  
10 am  
At John Alexander's home  
Contact: Alvin Halpern  
[alvin.halpern@gmail.com](mailto:alvin.halpern@gmail.com)

## Neuroscience Group

October 16, 2018  
2:00 pm  
At Bea's home at the Vi  
Contact: Bea Rose  
[beabe@me.com](mailto:beabe@me.com)

## Just Lunch

October 12, 2018  
12 noon  
Kaiserhof  
Sunset Cliffs Blvd, Ocean Beach  
Contact: Barbara Heckler  
[bheckler@san.rr.com](mailto:bheckler@san.rr.com)

## Supper with Scholars

October 4, 2018  
6 pm  
Humphreys  
In the Sheraton La Jolla  
Contact: Dave Parker  
[parkerd1954@gmail.com](mailto:parkerd1954@gmail.com)

## General Meetings

October 20, 2018  
November 17, 2018 at Vi  
January 19, 2019  
February 16, 2019  
March 16, 2019  
April 20, 2019  
May 18, 2019

President

Barbara Heckler

Send information for

SDIS Notebook to [bheckler@san.rr.com](mailto:bheckler@san.rr.com)

**SAVE THE DATE**  
**HOLIDAY PARTY**  
**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 8**