

# The Independent Scholar

## The Independent Scholar

The Newsletter of the  
National Coalition of  
Independent Scholars

Summer 2007 Vol. 21, No 2

## Letter from the president



As I've noted in e-mails to the membership, many members ask about taking copies of the NCIS brochure with them to meetings and conferences. We say yes, of course, please do so. To print out the brochure, go to our web site, click on [www.ncis.org/ncis\\_brochure.htm](http://www.ncis.org/ncis_brochure.htm), and print. Please note the pages will not be back-to-back as we usually have them made for us.

The Membership Committee will do a thorough review of the new dues structure and make its recommendations for the Board's October meeting. Thanks to all who contacted us about the new dues with comments both pro and con; all are useful input into the review process and will be cited (*sans* names) in the recommendations.

I've gotten a number of inquiries about the 2008 national conference. We are planning to have it 'Octoberish' in a comfortable California venue (think San Francisco Bay Area) well within our and your independent scholar budgets and close enough to a destination with interesting scholar-tourist features. If you are a Left Coast member of NCIS (no political implication intended) and want to participate in the local arrangements, program and other committees or be a volunteer to help your out-of-town visiting colleagues, send me a brief e-mail so I can collect this information.

Here's more news from California: the San Diego Independent Scholars had a 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary blast that was quite something. I missed the champagne and cake (my definite faves) but vice president Kati Lynn went to represent NCIS and she had a terrific time. SDIS president Cathy Blecki, Kati and all the guests seemed to feel the same vibes – a quarter century of dedication to independent scholars who are close, supportive colleagues and dear friends. Read Kati's report of the anniversary celebration on page 14.

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*Letter from the president, continued*

Another must-read report: Kendra Leonard on her attendance as NCIS representative to the May meeting of the American Council of Learned Societies (page 19). Kendra has pointed out some serious issues we need to grapple with. I suggest you give this report your close scrutiny.

Warmest thanks to David Sonenschein with whom we worked - we being Kati Lynn, Tom Snyder and I - on getting out the 2007 Membership Directory which was an all-volunteer effort. Note in the Index by Discipline that there have been some changes, reflecting members' self-identification and a sorting out of the names of fields for more rational indexing. Three disciplines that appeared in 2006 are not represented in 2007: City Planning, Cultural Studies, and Death/Aging. Two new areas are Area Studies and Creative Arts. American History and Studies has been changed slightly to American History/American Studies while Comparative Literature has become Literature (Comparative) to keep it with its Literature siblings. Likewise, Intellectual History has become History (Intellectual)/Scholarship while History (other than American) is now a twosome -- History (European) and History (Other).

May I wish you all a pleasant, productive, and restful summer despite lots of faraway travel, research and writing commitments, publishing deadlines, family picnics, and so on.

### Deadlines for submitting articles, essays, papers:

February 15      August 15  
May 15            November 15



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# What we hear from our members. . .

Opinions expressed by contributors may or may not reflect the opinion of the editor and *The Independent Scholar*.

To the Editor:

The opinion of those favorable to the change in the dues structure has been published in TIS. I certainly appreciate the sympathetic motivations that led to this change, which I challenge, however, based on the following considerations.

A point, first, which a colleague brought to my attention. This committed and long-time member, who has not renewed his NCIS membership, noticed a discrepancy between the two dues increase announcements he received: the first calculated contributions according to family income, and the second just stated income (a notion that presumably could be deducted as individual). He said that had it been individual, he would have stayed on board. Incidentally, most organizations (AHA, APSA, OAH, ASA, etc.) tally their rates according to *individual* income.

In evaluating the adjustment in contributions, one must note that NCIS, while charging a portion of its members substantially more than other organizations for membership, is in no way capable of offering them what professional associations do. Most of these give subscribers access to a wide array of periodicals in their field (the ASA publishes 10 journals), and access to their archives, either free, or for a small additional amount. Since Independent Scholars remain active in their particular field, why pay double or more the amount to remain part of an association that is in no way competitive? If most Independent Scholars are in difficult financial circumstances, would they not choose to relinquish their ties with NCIS rather than foregoing the immense wealth of resources that their immediate intellectual homes provide?

NCIS, to my knowledge, is not growing, and has been stagnating for several years. The "life membership" category, a notion imported from long-standing and solid organizations, shows some exaggeration.

While the new dues structure is indeed borrowed from other professional organizations, NCIS is not like other societies. Its whole purpose, as I see it, has been to foster a community of scholars as equals outside the academe. Those who wanted and could afford it, contributed to its funds through financial donations, and to its services by volunteering. I do think there is a clear merit in extending help to those who have difficulties, but another way could have been found, like, for instance, earmarking some funds from received donations to extend membership. I believe that PRF waives dues for low-income members, and NCIS could do the same while raising general contributions to \$50.

Of paramount concern to me, is that the new dues structure indicates a drift. It represents a significant change: introducing income disparities means implicitly reinforcing the notion of contingent scholars, which is directly imported from the academic world. Of course, many NCIS members are unemployed and would have yearned for a University career, but this does not signify that NCIS is an advocacy group for this section of our membership. For years I have struggled to change this image within the ACLS constituent societies, for it would have gotten us nowhere except waiting for crumbs on the margins, and to further instead the profile of an emerging community of scholars transformed both by the possibilities technology offers and by increasing longevity.

I deplore the fact that those who have shown reluctance to abide by the new dues structure have been simply dropped from the NCIS list without consideration for their past services. Your elimination from the directory of two long-term and dedicated NCIS members - Gloria Erlich and Harold Orlans - runs completely counter to our interests.

Sincerely,  
Laura Garcés

*Send your comments to Janet Wasserman, president, <MAE08BEN02@aol.com>  
or Linda Lucas, editor, <linda-lucas@charter.net>*

# The Art of Biography

By Mahala Yates Stripling

<DrRhetoric@aol.com>

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**Editor's Note:** This six-part series on the art of biography derives from Stripling's conference presentations and university lectures given over a ten-year period. It shows the process from choosing a subject, to researching, interviewing, and transcribing—and the equipment required—to the multitude of daily stylistic and ethical choices a biographer must make while writing. It addresses the special concerns when the subject is living. The series concludes with finding a publisher, and the final proof editing and marketing of the biography.

To those NCIS members who are thinking of writing a biography, this series offers sound guidelines. To those in the midst of writing one, as this series unfolds over the next two years, I ask that you send your comments and questions either to the series contributor, Mahala Yates Stripling, at <DrRhetoric@aol.com> or, if you wish them to be considered as a Letter to the Editor, to Linda Lucas at <linda-lucas@charter.net>.

## I. Overview and Getting Started

Thinking about writing a biography? My first advice is, choose your subject wisely. For you will be living with him or her for a long time. The biographer David McCullough started working on Pablo Picasso, and two years later he abandoned the project, saying he found Picasso's personal life too repellent and his story uninteresting, with too few personal struggles. He commented that choosing a biographical subject was like finding a roommate: "You're better off with someone you like." On the average, biographers will spend four years researching, another four writing, and then at least two promoting all of their hard work. When the subject is living, as mine is, there are added concerns, but it may be more interesting as well.

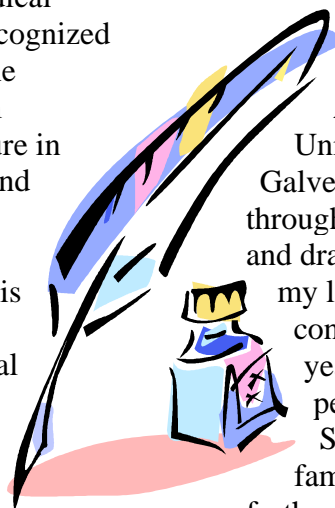
### Find your subject

I first was acquainted with my subject, Dr. Richard Selzer, a Yale surgeon-writer, when I read his cross-over book, *Mortal Lessons*

in 1976. I approached him about compiling a bibliography on him, which was subsequently published in *The Bulletin of Bibliography* in 1990. I followed that with master's (1993) and doctoral work (1997). I have been in touch with him all throughout these years. So it seemed a natural progression to move forward with a biography. But when I asked him in 1998 about writing one on him, at first he said he was "unworthy" and that his life had already been revealed in his writings, making it "an open book." In fact, his eleven books of short stories, essays, and memoirs are a valuable resource, but they are literary (read: partly made up). Sorting fact from fiction makes a biographer's job doubly hard. But while these jumbled writings confuse chronological order, they show Selzer's brilliance, humility, and imagination. Undeterred, and not realizing the full extent of the above, I pressed on and at last, he consented. I had my work cut out for me.

## Define subject's merit

Why is Richard Selzer (b. 1928) an important subject worthy of so much of my time and effort? He is a renowned doctor-writer often mentioned in the same breath with John Keats, Anton Chekhov, and William Carlos Williams. This is his first full-length biography. Following in his literary ancestor's footsteps, he was among the first contemporary physicians to understand the power within medicine of writing and reading fiction. His work influenced other writers, and medical education was transformed: it recognized that which it can only get from the Humanities and particularly from literature. He is an important figure in the evolving canon of literature and medicine. Selzer's attempts "to make art" in the midst of a busy surgical career are interesting—his road has not been an easy one to walk. At first, mainstream medical thinking viewed his poetic prose and humanistic thinking as warm and fuzzy and useless—compared to the teachings of the hard sciences. His colleagues would not sit with him at lunch in the Yale-New Haven Hospital cafeteria, fearing that as he wrote he was "telling the secrets of the priesthood." They were right, he did. But their early resistance has shifted, and now these same people consider Selzer their spokesperson, and three-quarters of medical schools now teach literature. His work broaches controversial topics like mercy killing, organ transplantation, and abortion. Important issues appearing in Selzer's work include: how doctors may feel inadequate—like impostors—with fears and trepidations just like the rest of us; how doctors may hate a patient and have to overcome their feelings of revulsion to adequately treat him; and how doctors have to carefully approach



writing about their patients because they may be breaching doctor-patient confidentiality.

## Identify your sources

The bibliography I had compiled gave me a leg up; I was started. Also, the face-to-face interview I conducted with Selzer at his home in New Haven, Connecticut, in 1992 for my master's work set a foundation. From 1998 on I have interviewed him in person every year. To prepare for interviews, I read ongoing publications on him, which tender valuable facts and let Selzer spin stories. In 1991, a Selzer Archive was established at the University of Texas Medical Branch-Galveston, so I made two visits to look through boxes and boxes of letters, diaries, and drafts, using my scanner to copy onto my laptop. The archive is being continually added to. Over the last eight years, I have conducted telephone and personal interviews with over 100 Selzer intimates, acquaintances, and family members (some were not forthcoming) for corroboration and alternative perspectives. I augmented all of these compelling accounts with facts and ideas gleaned from numerous book reviews and critical pieces.

## State your problems

Setting out, you can't possibly know all the problems you will have to deal with. My main problem was to put the events of Selzer's life in chronological order, thereby squaring away some facts. I was able to show what contributed to his becoming a surgeon first and then a writer. As an added bonus, as I researched each stage of Selzer's life I felt the pleasure of getting to know, all over again, the mind that created some of my favorite writings. I felt sorrow when a

grandson was born with birth defects. I also experienced joy when he was named runner-up for the prestigious Pen-Faulkner prize. But no matter how exhaustively I researched, I came to realize that some things are unknowable. Like most people, Selzer's memories, self-styled as "gap-toothed," can be sharp and focused or foggy. But when he's in storyteller's mode he comes to life.

### Set your objectives

My objectives, which evolved, became fourfold: I connect Selzer's works to his life experiences, showing how his imagination flies; I comment on his themes and styles; I explicate his role in balancing the technological outlook of medicine with empathy for patients; and I establish his significance in the evolving canon known as literature and medicine.

### Know personal challenges

Because of Selzer's accessibility, I admit to being a bit of a sycophant when I first started this project ten years ago. Anything I wrote on Saint Selzer at that point would have turned into a Boswellian hagiography. Fortunately, that honeymoon phase was replaced with a biographer's objective realism. Other qualities desirable in a biographer are an obsessive tendency and inbred patience. These are necessary to keep focus and follow-through. I have missed one self-imposed deadline when new material popped up from the archive. Editors at a publishing house go through manuscripts and select those to discuss in committees that meet twice a year. From the time of acceptance, it takes at least a year to process

a manuscript for publication. Substantial problems, such as major rewriting and acquiring permissions can cause unexpected delays. My next deadline is this June/July to reach a publication goal of fall 2008 (Selzer's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday). Wish me luck!

### Expect this next

In part II, I discuss the many hats I wear and the team I have built (one got me out of trouble). I explain how I research and record historical events, retell stories, and find parallels and use examples. I show the importance of keeping heads-up throughout the process to avoid the quicksand of ethical dilemmas.

At last, I show you how I test my product.

### Here are tips

To digitally organize your material into each chapter, create a master document. Also, to physically organize your material (photos, drafts), separate it into chapters laid out onto a large table or several smaller tables. I use colorful toy bins for the overlap.



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*The Independent Scholar* (NCIS).

To see period postings on *Richard Selzer: A Biography* (in two volumes), including evolving table of contents, see:  
<<http://medicalhumanities.net/chapter.html>>.

# How I Created a “Virtual” Scholarly Society in Three Easy Steps

*By Tom Snyder*

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I am a retired surgeon, and a retired naval officer. I just happen to live in the town that had the first Navy base on the west coast, the now closed Mare Island Naval Shipyard.

The Navy’s first hospital also was located at Mare Island, and I decided that writing its history would be a good way to combine my medical and military interests, and get back to what I’ve always loved—history.

## Step 1:

**Deciding, with good support, to do the deed.**

Part of my research required visits to the Office of the Historian at the Navy’s Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, where I became friendly with the junior historian, André Sobocinski. After a couple of years of quarterly research visits, André and I got to talking about our dream of a Society that would serve to gather people who are interested in our rather narrow niche of the historical world—the history of medicine unique to the maritime environment.

Straight away, I volunteered to launch the organization; André agreed to edit and produce a Society publication.

1 2 3

## Step 2:

**Gather a few committed souls, agree on the goals of your Society, and let it loose!**

André also offered to feed me names of interested people (lots of folks interested in the history of Navy medicine pass through his Foggy Bottom office), and I agreed to contact each one. I used email only, writing to candidates and inviting them to look at a flyer about the prospective Society. By May 2006, I had recruited about ten interested people. It was time to officially launch the Society.

We chose the annual meeting of the American Association for the History of Medicine in Halifax, and at 7:30 AM on a Sunday morning, five stalwarts met over breakfast to discuss the Vision and Mission of the Society. By 9:00 AM, we had decided to go “official,” and the Society was born.



## Step 3 is ongoing:

### Grow the Society, and plan for the future.

I have emailed the libraries of most US medical schools to request they post our flyer; I have emailed our information to academic and historical organizations with requests that they publicize our Society; I continue to email contacts, or reply to inquiries that I receive by mail.

Do you see a theme here? Everything is done by email, including the sending and receiving of the Society membership application. The result is that our costs are nil, and the only “fee” for Society membership, so far, is the time it takes to fill out and return that form.

And André has come through with two issues of what is now our bimonthly publication, *The Grog Ration*, a .PDF file, distributed by—email.

Since May 2006, we have grown to 40 members from six nations. Our members all have an interest in the history of medicine: medical practitioners, civilian and military, active and retired; graduate students; professors, and a professional historian or two. We even can claim the Director of the Medical Department of the Royal Danish Navy as one of our number!

In May 2007, we will have our first non-virtual event: the First Annual Meeting and Papers Session of the Society for the History of Navy Medicine, to occur concurrently with the AAHM meeting in Montreal.

### *Addendum to original article, as reported by Tom Snyder, June 5, 2007:*

The SHNM did indeed have our first non-virtual event, in Montreal, at the same time as the annual meeting of the American Association for the History of Medicine.

While attendance was light (the location and time were inconvenient--learning pains!), we had four excellent papers: one by the head of history at Old Dominion University, another by a surgeon from the Fleet, one from the curator of the naval medical collection at the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology's Museum, and one by the dean of Navy medical historical writers in the US.



We are already planning for our second annual meeting and papers session, to be held concurrently with the AAHM meeting in Rochester, NY, in April 2008! The organization numbers exactly 70 members, and is looking to grow to 100 by the end of the year. We are planning now to set up a non-profit Foundation for the History of Navy Medicine. I have been told there are quite a few wealthy Medical Corps admirals (and other medical types) who want to donate substantial funds to such a Foundation, with the view of someday having a museum (possibly located in the *USS Iowa*), dedicated exclusively to the history of Navy medicine.



# Pollyanna and Independence Dreams

By Claudine Griggs

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I am a writer, independent scholar, and an adjunct instructor in the Rhode Island College English department. Sometimes I investigate full-time teaching appointments at community colleges, or perhaps a university lectureship, but my heart doesn't seem in it. When I received a call last spring to interview at a college with a 5/4 teaching load, I decided that, in fact, I was a happy "independent" and removed myself from the full-time market.

But let me pause briefly with a little background noise: In July 2007, I will turn 54. The age is important. It whispers variations of "just do it" regarding all ambition. I taught full-time in the 1980s for four years and then bolted to law firms in the private sector as an executive assistant/office manager. The money was better, the hours fewer. Somehow, from 1993-2004, I published three nonfiction books about gender identity, transsexualism, and social construction of attributed gender (along with the reconfiguration of body to support that construction), i.e., *Passage Through Trinidad* (1996), *S/he* (1998), and *Journal of a Sex Change* (2004). In 2001, I returned to teaching during the opening season of Soka University of America, in Aliso Viejo, California, while keeping a wandering eye on continued publication. Love led me to Rhode Island in 2003, where I gnashed my teeth through a first New England winter, developed a "full-time equivalent" teaching load at two institutions, and spent summers working on a literary fantasy novel. However, before the release of *Journal*, I turned down a contract offer for a fourth "gender book,"

which signaled the end of attempts to publish my way into a regular teaching post and of my predilection for what one editor called "participatory ethnography." I simply wanted to do other things: venture into fiction; write year-round and not just in summer; redefine my professional identity from "tenure-line wannabe" to unrepentant writer, adjunct, and investigator of topics without regard for institutional sex-appeal.

This sometimes feels self-destructive because working as a part-time instructor/independent scholar can be a precarious soft-shale walk along the whims of departmental budgets, shifting enrollments, available course times, and publisher tastes. But

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**...working as a part-time instructor/independent scholar can be a precarious soft-shale walk along the whims of departmental budgets...**

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somehow, for me, combining the associated risks is like multiplying two negative numbers. The product is more adventure than black hole. Let me explain some enabling functions.

*Dwarf Days*, that novel I worked on during my initial Rhode Island summers, is now miraculously under review by a young-adult publisher, despite a 127,000-word count and adult language. But as I wait for a response and put the final touches on a new novel, I expect *Dwarf Days* to be rejected, which is a subtle part of my "happy independent" strategy. That way, when I receive literary pink slips, I can pat myself on the back for (1) judiciously maintaining my part-time teaching schedule, (2) brilliantly predicting the future, and (3) bravely accepting the artistic hardships of a non-affiliated life. If I am wrong in my prediction, the joy of publication overshadows the three rationalizations. This might be a postmodern form of quiet desperation, but I have already been "right" 37 times in my first-round predictions for *Dwarf Days*, and I am still standing. And there are

the platitudinous “almosts” that provide further comfort. For example, one editor writes: “Having examined your proposal...and discussed it among ourselves...[t]he idea of putting disparate market genres together always offers opportunity, and I have to admit that we do feel there’s some potential for bringing ‘high fantasy’ conventions into a slightly tongue-in-cheek political thriller...,” but we are not “best positioned to give it a decent chance at sales.” I can live off such rejections for days, smiling in the face of under-projected sales or other apocrypha that do not fit into my Independence Bible. And as I wait to hear from that single editor who asked to look at the whole *Dwarf Days* manuscript, I am finishing another called *Desperate Moon*. I anticipate rejections on that one, too. I laugh.

I have not, however, gone completely *Star Wars* with my authorial ambitions, swirling imaginary ink-tipped light-quills in my living room. I want to teach *and* maintain my independence. Writers can become isolated beyond sensibility, and adjuncting is a good social and financial insurance policy. Further, I have been freelancing long enough to know that there are more losers than winners of royalty jackpots (the payouts for my published academic nonfiction have been less than I would have earned as a part-time burger-and-fries scholar). So there will be no burning bridges. I keep my class rosters dry and shoot for reasonably good teacher evaluations. That’s sensible. *Dwarf Days* might not return page proofs. *Desperate Moon* might be too desperate. And even if both find a publisher, sales might flop without the flip.

“Potential” realities sometimes require sub-rationalization: The ethereal psychic rewards of teaching that empower my willingness to write, submit, and face cyclical editorial rejection. To be sure, regular faculty

and administrators can be downright ill mannered to adjuncts. They seem to think that “independent scholar” is code for “couldn’t finish dissertation,” “failed job search,” or “undercover waitress.” But English departments almost always inspire me to read more and to consider new investigatory topics. Academic personalities are interesting, too. I might just as easily run into a feminist philosopher poet or Victorian dramatist; and any related academic eccentricity seems inconsequential, perhaps because I possess more than my share. But mostly, there are fellow writers in almost every quarter who let me draw upon them for strength and warmth and encouragement. Try to find that with the regular hours and increased salary at the Law Offices of Sober, Somber, & Sue’um.

My 2007-08 academic year seems typically

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**I have not, however, gone completely *Star Wars* with my authorial ambitions, swirling imaginary ink-tipped light-quills in my living room.**

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uncertain, but my life-year looks pretty solid and independent. I have progressively cut my combined teaching load from 4/3 to 3/3 to 2/2, which I plan to maintain as I write throughout the year instead

of just summers. While my adjusted annual income is lower than it has been in 20 years, my daily word count is higher, and I am having more fun with a keyboard than is probably legal in most Red States. And when the inevitable late-night Reason Demon flutters about salary-plus-benefits and the logic of interviewing at that 5/4 college (“You know you really want it”), I am tempted less and less. More and more, my conglomerate occupations feel like an informed handshake agreement between better and best. I look around my small home office under a stairwell and marvel that, perhaps, I have constructed a respectable tenure portfolio in adjuncting, writing, and waiting for messages from editors that I have never met.

Then again, “card-carrying Independent Scholar” might be departmental code for “crazy woman *sans* Thorazine” or “too weird to be Orwellian.”

# FINAL CALL FOR PAPERS

## *INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF INDEPENDENT SCHOLARS* *JOURNAL INTERNATIONAL DES CHERCHEURS INDÉPENDANTS*

The Canadian Academy of Independent Scholars / L'Académie Canadienne des Chercheurs Indépendants, is calling for papers to be published in the forthcoming first issue of its annual journal, the *International Journal of Independent Scholars* / *Journal International des Chercheurs Indépendants*.\*

The journal encompasses all aspects of inquiry in arts, letters, humanities, and sciences. The journal is especially interested in fostering the publication of multidisciplinary research and works that explore the conceptual limits of established disciplines. The journal also publishes reports on current trends in interdisciplinary research, as well as documents about events involving scholars who have influenced the development of their own discipline.

### GUIDELINES FOR AUTHORS

We invite independent scholars to submit an **abstract** (100 words maximum) and a short curriculum vitae together with their mailing and email address. Once your abstract has been approved we will contact you regarding the submission of an **article**. The journal accepts articles written either in English or French. Articles must be the author's original work and not under consideration by another publisher. The style should follow the recommendations of the *Chicago Manual of Style* ([www.chicagomanualofstyle.org](http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org)). Articles or materials sent to us are appreciated but cannot be returned. Articles should not exceed 6,000 words in length, including footnotes and references. Poetic texts may range from any length to approximately 1,200 words. Book reviews shall not exceed 400 words. All written material (preferred format: MS Word), photographs and/or illustrations (preferred format: JPG or TIFF) must be sent as an attachment to [cais\\_journal@sfu.ca](mailto:cais_journal@sfu.ca).

### IMPORTANT NOTICE

<b>Deadline for abstracts:</b>	<b>June 30, 2007</b>
<b>Deadline for articles:</b>	<b>October 30, 2007</b>

\*An independent scholar is a person who is pursuing knowledge in or across any field, but whose research is not supported, for the most part, by an academic institution. However, a person employed by such institution and who pursues research on a topic not related to her/his appointment, might be considered an independent scholar. Further information about the Canadian Academy of Independent Scholars can be found at <<http://www.independentscholars.net>. >

# Indy Times: Affiliate Liaison's Corner



By Mahala Yates Stripling

Indy Colleagues,

This column is dedicated to highlighting newsworthy affiliate people and events. Please send your news to Mahala Yates Stripling, email: <DrRhetoric@aol.com>, or mail to 5121 Sealands Lane, Ft. Worth, TX 76116. Here is what our affiliates have been up to.

## *The San Diego Independent Scholars*

### **SDIS TURNS 25: LOOKIN' GOOD**

Conviviality and Scholarship go hand in hand.

Thirty-three independent scholars and their guests celebrated "SDIS@25," the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the San Diego Independent Scholars, at the La Jolla Woman's Club on April 22, 2007. We enjoyed wine and appetizers on the verandah and a buffet



Founders Mary Stroll and Aline Hornaday

lunch from Café Athena in the garden room. Our guests added to the celebration with their good wishes. Katalin Kádár Lynn, Vice President and Membership Chair of the NCIS, read a letter of congratulations from NCIS President, Janet Wasserman, who noted with appreciation that a conference in 1986 sponsored by SDIS

*I enjoyed this gracious, collegial group of impressive scholars.—Kati Lynn*

helped lay the groundwork for the national organization. [See DeLacy's history on SDIS at [www.ncis.org](http://www.ncis.org).] Georgia Wright from the Institute for Historical Study (Berkeley) thanked members for collecting and delivering carloads of goods when her house burned down in the Oakland fires. Stanley Chodorow, who supported the fledgling SDIS when he was Dean at the University of California, San Diego, spoke briefly and thoughtfully on "The Importance of Independent Scholarship," noting that being "dependent" on each other was sometimes the key to success. We all toasted SDIS's past achievements, its present activities, and its future!

—Cathy Blecki, SDIS President

- Recent speakers at SDIS meetings are: Australian Sandra Joss on "Beyond the Dreamings: Becoming Aboriginal in an Urban Art World"; Sharon Darrough on "Refugees: Worldwide and Here in San Diego."

Editor's Note: *For more information on the SDIS, see "San Diego Independent Scholars Celebrate 25 Years" on page 14 and "Scholars Beyond University Walls" on page 22.*

### ***The Northwest Independent Scholars Association***

Author Dick Etulain, Professor Emeritus of History at the University of New Mexico and the son of a Basque immigrant livestockman, explained that he was faced with challenges over the five years it took him to research and write *Beyond the Missouri: The Story of the American West* (University of New Mexico Press, 2006). In particular, writing a "crossover" book for a general and academic audience while still maintaining its broad scope was important to him. Other books by this prolific author include *Conversations with Wallace Stegner* (1983, 1996), *The American West: A Twentieth-Century History* (with Michael P. Malone, 1989), *Telling Western Stories: From Buffalo Bill to Larry McMurtry* (1999) and many others.

### ***The Institute for Historical Study***

In its Biography Writers group, Autumn Stanley, who had just finished *More Hell and Fewer Dahlias* on Charlotte Smith, presented her last piece to the group—the Introduction—asking how well it pulled the readers in; that is, did it establish that all important sense of overture to the subject? The Readers of Medieval History group presented and discussed *Travels with a Medieval Queen* by Mary Taylor Simeti. The History-Play Readers group became engaged in Gore Vidal's *An Evening with Richard Nixon* (1972), not having exhausted themselves after covering the subject of Mozart and Salieri in earlier times.

### ***The Princeton Research Forum***

"Scholarship is like solving a puzzle. Perhaps the best research stretches that model, but the project that I began nearly thirty years ago fits it perfectly. The pieces have fallen into place—the last one only a few days ago." PRF President Mary Beth Lewis goes on to say in their Forum newsletter that now she faces the psychological challenge of making "a bulky manuscript" she has been working on so long readable. She looks to her community of independent scholars for support because they understand "the high wire act of doing scholarship without the net of a college or university appointment" and are "acquainted with the double-edged sword of having no deadlines. On the one hand this offers the freedom to pursue a problem to its roots, however deep or widespread. On the other, it opens up the abyss of never-ending research." She finds solace and edification from her colleagues at PRF, as she taps into their multidisciplinary knowledge.

- Recent PRF news: The Science Group discussed Harvard psychologist Daniel Gilbert's book *Stumbling on Happiness*; The Poetry Group read Jorie Graham's *Never*; The History Group discussed Lisa Jardine's *The Awful End of Prince William the Silent*; and The History Group read Patricia Tyson Stroud's *The Man Who Had Been King*.

**"You don't invent your mission; you detect it," says Victor Frankl (*Man's Search for Meaning*).**

**Today's IT tip (formula for success):  
Connect your passion to the world.**

# San Diego Independent Scholars Celebrate 25 years

*By Katalin Kádár Lynn*

It was my privilege and pleasure to attend SDIS' 25th Anniversary luncheon in La Jolla, California on April 22, 2007, representing the board and the officers of NCIS at the festive event.

NCIS president Janet Wasserman could not travel from the east coast, nor could Tom Snyder, NCIS treasurer, attend, but it was a short hop down to La Jolla from San Francisco for me. I was thrilled to hear that NCIS immediate past president Georgia Wright would also be attending, so the two of us went together. Long time SDIS board member Gerry Horwitz kindly made the airport run, picked us up at San Diego airport, and returned us to the same.

The luncheon was held at the La Jolla Women's Club, a charming venue with a lovely verandah near the ocean. When we arrived, the president of SDIS Catherine Blecki and her board of directors could not have made Georgia and me feel more welcome. Georgia knew many of the members and in fact, one of her reasons for attending was to personally thank SDIS for the "station wagon" full of household items that an SDIS member delivered to Georgia soon after her home was completely destroyed in the Berkeley fire.

The program of the day celebrated SDIS and its history was recounted. Dr. Stanley Chodorow, a respected medieval

scholar, the former Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at the University of California San Diego and the former provost at the University of Pennsylvania, was the keynote speaker. It was fitting that Dr. Chodorow gave the talk, as he was instrumental in SDIS being granted library privileges at UC when the organization was formed. He is a staunch supporter of independent scholars to this day and gave an insightful talk on the value of the independent scholar and the contribution

independents make to scholarly work.

The birthday celebration culminated in a large birthday cake being wheeled in and everyone singing "Happy Birthday" to SDIS!

It was a pleasure to attend the

celebration, to meet SDIS members and hear that they are still just as committed to independent scholarship as they were twenty-five years ago. It is fitting for us to honor SDIS at 25 as they put the independent scholar movement on the map and spearheaded the founding of the NCIS. Without them, there would be no NCIS!

We look forward to many more years of contribution to NCIS by SDIS and its lively and interesting members and hope that many of our NCIS members will have an opportunity to meet SDIS members in person at our 2008 Conference, which we hope to hold on the west coast.



*Katalin Kádár Lynn  
Vice President & Membership Chair*

# Welcome, new NCIS members!

*Because new members join throughout the year, they have traditionally had to wait until the revised annual membership directory appears for their entry in directory format. Instead of making them wait, we have now increased the opportunity for new members to tell their colleagues about their work – papers, books, articles, reviews, and so on – as soon as they have joined NCIS, in this TIS new member profiles section. New members may include three bibliographic citations in their biographic information. Thereafter, any member may submit a new publication for listing in TIS, as it occurs.*

- Janet Wasserman

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Marie has an M.A.T. from SUNY Stony Brook and a B.A. from Barnard, both in English, which underlines her career as a middle and high school teacher of English and creative writing. More recently, she has concentrated on providing individualized instruction for homebound students. For the past decade, she has been a production editor for the American Institute of Physics Publishing Center. As an independent scholar, she has begun to explore the rise of Christianity in Ireland with the goal of publishing in her area of research interest.

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Ellen has a D.L.S. from Columbia University and has had a career as a librarian, archivist, and editor in academia and for non-profit educational and professional organizations. She has lectured and written extensively in her fields—the history of the book, American publishing history, and the history of libraries and librarianship. Since 1997, she has been a book reviewer in the social sciences for *Library Journal* and was a proposal consultant for a major scholarly publisher. She has chapters on the University of Toronto Press and Rutgers University Press for the forthcoming *History of University Presses in North America* from Gale.

### Publications

*The House of Holt, A Documentary Volume (Dictionary of Literary Biography Series)*, Gale, 2003.

"Confidentially Speaking: American Libraries and the USA Patriot Act," *Library Philosophy & Practice*, vol. 8, no. 1, Fall 2005.

"What Women Can Do When They Put Their Minds To It": Elaine Showalter and Virago Press, *The Journal of the Rutgers University Library*, vol. 61, 2005.



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David has an M.A. in Philosophy and an M.A. in Educational Leadership from Western Michigan University. He currently teaches philosophy and ethics at Siena Heights University in Michigan and runs a multifaceted website on the humanities called the Synopsis Society at <[www.iwebfolio.com/public/david\\_keith2000](http://www.iwebfolio.com/public/david_keith2000)>.

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Carol has a Ph.D. in American Studies from University of Kansas in which she continued her undergraduate and graduate interests in religion and cultural theory, popular culture, and race-gender theory. She has taught, presented papers and published in these areas, which also include her current research on 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century sectarian/alternative religious texts and American religious history. She expects to see two new books published in 2008 as well as having an article and a paper in progress for next year.

**Publications**

*New Religious Movements: Young Adult Reader*, Chelsea House Publishing, 2005.

“Wovoka and Drew Noble Ali: Prophetic Revelation, Trans-Identities and Antinationalism,” in W. Burszta et al., eds., *Nationalisms Across the Globe*, Poznan: Wyzsza Szkoła Nauk Humanistycznych i Dziennikarstwa (School of Humanities and Journalism), 2007.

“The Master Race and the Family of Light: Conflict, Spiritual Purification and Bio-Political Agendas in JJ Hurtak’s ‘Key of Knowledge’,” *Cyberproceedings*, 2004 International Conference, Center for Studies on New Religions, at Baylor University, 2004.  
<[www.cesnur.org](http://www.cesnur.org)>

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Joanna has an M.F.A. in English from University of Utah where she currently teaches. Her research areas include poet/poetics, and comparative studies in poetry, especially romanticism and the British, American, German, and French modern movements. She has lectured on poetry and on the novel and given poetry readings. She was Poet in Residence at the Kimmel Harding Nelson Center for the Arts in Nebraska.

**Publications**

*Instinct: Poems*, Bright Hills Press, 2006.

“Fragments of Perfection,” *Ellipsis Magazine*, 2006.

*Hermitage: Poems*, Master’s Thesis, University of Utah, 2002.

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Cosette has a Doctorate in Comparative Literature from the University of La Sorbonne in Paris and taught French and comparative literature in France and the US. After a few years as an independent book publicist, translator, and literary agent on the West Coast, she joined the San Francisco office of Amnesty International (Western Region) and recently retired as its director although she remains at AI as a human rights consultant. Her current research area is endangered languages as a human rights issue, with selected languages for comparative study from the USA, Mexico, and western Europe.

**Publications**

*Symphonie déconcertante*, Paris: Édition Saint-Germain des Pres, 1980. [poetry]

*La Fauçil des jours*, Paris: Édition Saint-Germain des Pres, 1979. [poetry]

*La carrière dramatique en France d’Harriet Smithson*, Paris: La Sorbonne, 1974. [Dissertation]

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Editor’s Note: *Initial bibliographic information for new members is provided in the new member profiles. For all members, subsequent lectures, courses, book reviews, essays – anything that is current or will happen soon, are very appropriate as member news items in TIS. Send your news items to the editor, < linda-lucas@charter.net >.*

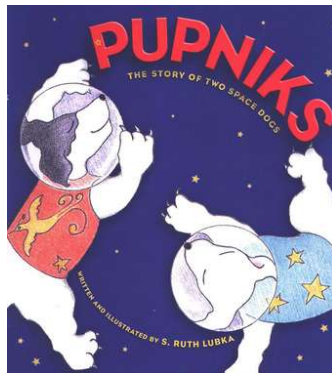
## A PASSING: S. Ruth Lubka

*At our June 2006 national conference in Princeton I had the great pleasure of meeting and talking at length with Ruth Lubka, who was a member of the Princeton Research Forum (PRF), and who very soon after became a member of NCIS. We had maintained an e-mail conversation and had hoped to get together once again. I was informed by Ellen Gilbert of PRF that Ruth died in mid-March after her heroic battle with cancer. Ellen has kindly permitted us to reprint her tribute she sent to the PRF membership on March 22, the day Ruth died. - Janet Wasserman*

Dear PRF Colleagues,

Our colleague, my dear friend S. Ruth Lubka, died this morning, after a long, heroic battle with cancer. Ruth was a lawyer, an artist, a poet, and an author of children's books. After the publication of *Pupniks*, an enchanting book about the real-life adventures of two Russian female dogs named Belka and Strelka who orbited Earth in their spaceship, Sputnik 5 in 1960, Ruth was interviewed by *Something about the Author*, a biographical series about children's book writers and illustrators. She told them: "As a child, I lived in a world of *unknowable* secrets. My parents were Holocaust survivors who had come to the United States in 1947, just a year before I was born. They were determined to protect me from the dark mystery of their past. Still, I understood from a very early age that much was hidden from me, like the fate of my grandparents. The secrets of my childhood gave birth to a passion for knowing what existed beyond the world around me.

decade that followed, my unknown found a new, brighter space explorers of that time, four-legged, tail-wagging asked myself. 'Did they realize Although we have learned a space exploration, the answers never be known. But they are even today, can delight in *PUPNIKS* fan wrote to me, 'I seem.' Researching, writing, and illustrating *PUPNIKS* was great fun, and I hope my book will introduce children to an important era in history, one marked by an exhilarating sense of discovery."



And in the late 1950s and the passion for understanding the focus: space exploration. Of all the none appealed to me more than the variety. 'What did they think?' I they were in outer space?' great deal since the early day of to those questions will probably surely something that children, contemplating. As one young guess dogs are smarter than they

Ruth was pleased to be a member of PRF. She brought her enthusiasm and originality of thought to luncheon conversations and Work-in-Progress presentations. She especially enjoyed attending the annual NCIS meeting last Spring. Her own WIP last year, on a proposed book for young adults about the Russian aeronautical pioneer Konstantin Tsiolkovsky, showed Ruth in great form as she considered the technical achievements of this prescient scientist in the context of history and (not at all surprisingly for Ruth), with particular respect to Tsiolkovsky's own humanity (he was deaf from childhood).

Ruth was smart and funny, a great teller of tales and one of the best listeners I have ever known. Thanks for everything, Ruth.

– Ellen Gilbert

# Report on the ACLS 2007 Spring Meeting

*By Kendra Leonard*

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The American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) met from May 10-12 in Montréal, Ontario. Topics for discussion included the American Academy of Arts and Sciences Humanities Indicators Project; open access and scholarly communication; emerging themes and methods of humanities research; the state of funding for the humanities and the NEH; and the global academy. Guest speakers included Bruce Cole, the Chairman of the NEH; and Linda Nochlin, recipient of the Charles Home Haskins Prize.

The American Academy of Arts and Sciences Humanities Indicators Project is an ongoing study of funding, projects and impact of the humanities in the United States. I have offered to provide census information from the latest NCIS survey to assist with the Project's tracking of humanities activity outside of academia.

The discussion on open access was an intense one. Representatives from the American Association of University Presses and advocates of open access both made strong statements reflecting their respective positions. The ACLS is continuing to liaise with the National Humanities Alliance Task Force on Open Access and Scholarly Communication to investigate the many possible options for member societies and their publishing endeavors. New publishing options and delivery methods will necessarily cause changes in the structures and budgeting for all involved societies. This is a topic of particular interest for NCIS as it continues to produce print newsletters and begins its journal publishing operations.

Collaboration was a major topic in the presentation and discussion of emerging themes and methods in the humanities. An increasing number of scholars are finding that to affect significant work, they are turning to work with colleagues both from their own disciplines and other disciplines. Speakers in literature, cultural and area studies, and history all testified to their use of collaboration and interdisciplinary methods and approaches in their work. NCIS members can benefit greatly from collaborative work; many are involved in interdisciplinary projects. A guide to successful collaboration for members, discussing inter-societal collaboration as well as individual collaborations, would be of great use to our members.

Bruce Cole, speaking at lunch, asserted that while funding for the NEH had been leveled out in the President's budget, initiatives in the Senate and House were working to raise that amount by an additional \$36 million. The National Humanities Alliance, represented by Jessica Jones Irons, is working now to help promote this initiative through lobbying. Cole and Irons both stressed the need for activism by scholars and the learned societies to assist in this push for greater funding.

The concept of the "global academy" was one entwined with the discussion on collaboration and interdisciplinarity and focused on the work of scholars both domestic and foreign in the humanities. Speakers addressed issues of perspective, history, and access in describing their projects and concerns. Linda Nochlin, winner of the Charles Homer Haskins Prize, also spoke on the widening of cultural borders and her experiences outside of her native sphere as driving some of her most important work in Art History.

*Continued on next page.*

*Report on ACLS, continued*

The last day of the meeting saw presentations from Canadian advocates for the humanities, planning meetings for the fall 2007 retreat and meeting in Salt Lake City, and a tour of the city. Montréal offers superb meeting facilities for even small groups and the costs of conferences there are often lower than in the United States, especially in the winter months, when drastic discounts are available for hotel and meeting space.

As the representative for NCIS, I found a number of society delegates and administrative officers interested in and receptive of the condition of independent scholars in their disciplines. A number of groups, including the MLA, now offer awards and/or grants and travel funding specifically for independent scholars, a clear indicator that they are recognizing independent scholars within their areas. I spoke at length with representatives from the National Communications Association, the College Art Association, and others as to how to provide members with information on NCIS and, in return, how to help our members in those fields participate in their national conferences.

The recommendations made to NCIS as a result of the 2006 fall meeting of the ACLS still stand; unfortunately, few of them have been acted upon. In light of achieving some parity with our sister societies, I hope that we will be able to accomplish many, if not all of the items on the “Action for NCIS” document this year. While other societies are cognizant of independent scholars within their ranks, the overall perception of NCIS is low and we need to correct this through well-planned and well-communicated action.

The next meeting of the ACLS will take place Salt Lake City, November 1-4.

## A Bit About Bryher

**By Elizabeth Lloyd- Kimbrel**

Editor’s Note: *Readers contacted Ms. Lloyd-Kimbrel for more information about Bryher in response to her article “Puttering About in the Mindfields” in the Spring 2007 issue. Ms. Lloyd-Kimbrel has provided the following addendum to her original article.*

- Date of birth: 2 September 1894, in Margate, Kent, England.  
Date of death: 28 January 1983, in Burier/Vevey, Switzerland.
- Birth name: Annie Winifred [Glover] Ellerman – daughter of Hannah Glover and Sir John Reeves Ellerman, a shipping magnate and reputedly the wealthiest man in Britain. Traveled extensively as a child with her parents (who did not wed until 1908) throughout Europe, the Mediterranean, North Africa, and the Middle East.
- Legally changed her name to “Bryher,” the smallest of the inhabited Isles of Scilly. Bryher had a lifelong association with and affection for the Scilly Isles, Cornwall, and Switzerland (which was her principal residence).
- Greatly influenced in her youth by the works of Jessie L. Weston, esp. Weston’s work on Gawain. Initially trained as an archaeologist before turning to publishing, philanthropy, politics, and writing. Admired William Morris. Dismissed Tennyson’s historical/military “inaccuracy” in *Idylls of the King*.
- Husbands: Robert McAlmon (American writer/publisher) and Kenneth Macpherson (Scottish novelist/experimental filmographer).

- Long-time companion: H.D. (Hilda Doolittle, American Imagist poet). Bryher and Macpherson formally adopted H.D.'s daughter Perdita, whose biological father was the composer Cecil Gray (H.D.'s husband was the novelist Richard Aldington).
- Financially independent, broadly philanthropic, and multilingual. Friend, associate, and often financial supporter of many of the Paris expatriates and others in the 1920s and 1930s, including Sylvia Beach, T.S. Eliot, James Joyce, Gertrude Stein, etc., as well as 'literati' in U.S. and Britain throughout her life. Also connected to the European psychoanalytic community and movement, offering financial and moral support as well as undergoing analysis. Essentially, Bryher knew practically everybody who was or would be anybody in American and Continental literary, artistic, intellectual, and political circles.
- In 1923, Bryher and McAlmon's Parisian press, Contact Editions (financed by Bryher), published Ernest Hemingway's first book, *Three Stories & Ten Poems* in a limited edition of 300 copies. McAlmon and Hemingway were friends who later had a falling out. Contact Editions published many of the notable expatriate writers of the day.
- With second husband Macpherson and inamorata H.D., founded, financed, and edited *Close Up* (1927-1933), the first journal ever "devoted to film as art."
- In 1930, H.D., Macpherson, and Bryher made *Borderline*, an experimental, German Expressionist-influenced film featuring H.D. and Paul Robeson (in his second movie role), with Bryher in an uncredited but intriguing role as the concierge of a scruffy café/boarding-house.
- Founded, financed, and edited the 1930s-1940s literary magazine *Life and Letters Today* ("having bought enough paper to last through the war").
- During the build-up to World War II, Bryher helped over one hundred refugees escape Nazi Germany. Her home in Switzerland was the conduit until she too had to decamp to Britain via Portugal. Her vocal anti-Fascism efforts had begun in 1933.
- Bryher's books –
  - AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL NOVELS:** *Development* (1920), *Two Selves* (1923), *Manchester* (serialized, 1935-1936)
  - MEMOIRS:** *West* (1924), *The Heart to Artemis: A Writer's Memoir* (1962), *The Days of Mars: A Memoir, 1940-1946* (1972)
  - POETRY:** *The Region of Lutany* (1914), *Arrow Music* (1922)
  - NON-FICTION:** *Amy Lowell: A Critical Appreciation* (1918), *A Picture Geography for Little Children: Part One - Asia* (1925), *Film Problems of Soviet Russia* (1929), *The Light-hearted Student: I German* (1930 - grammar text)
  - FICTION:** *Civilians* (1927 - London during World War I), *Beowulf* (1948 - the London Blitz), *The Fourteenth of October* (1952 - Saxon view of 1066), *The Player's Boy* (1953 - Elizabethan/Jacobean theatre), *Roman Wall* (1954 - 3<sup>rd</sup> century Switzerland), *Gate to the Sea* (1958 - Greek colony of Pæstum in 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE Italy), *Ruan* (1960 - 6<sup>th</sup> century Wales, Cornwall, Scilly Isles), *The Coin of Carthage* (1963 - the Punic Wars), *Visa for Avalon* (1965 - 'science fantasy'), *This January Tale* (1966 - Britain after Hastings), *The Colours of Vaud* (1969 - 18<sup>th</sup> century Switzerland)



## **Scholars Beyond University Walls**

*San Diego's independent scholars are not dabblers -- their success comes in part from being outsiders.*

By Cathy Robbins

**Monday, May 21, 2007** If you think arbitrage -- trade that takes advantage of price differences between markets -- is a modern financial practice, **Aline Hornaday** knows some medieval farmers who had it down cold. In fact, they were so good at arbitrage that they blocked the emperor Charlemagne from imposing uniform weights and measures across his empire, even though his public works and political reforms laid the tracks for modern Europe.

Hornaday, an independent scholar, discovered that the farmers resisted Charlemagne's standardized measures, because they were avid arbitragers, profiting on commodity trading with uneven measures and prices. Even in the 9th Century, globalization had its wrinkles.

UCSD's Stanley Chodorow cites Hornaday's insight about medieval arbitragers as an example of what the independent scholar can bring to knowledge. Her experience as a businessperson gave Hornaday the understanding that had eluded academic scholars.

Hornaday worked for 20 years as editor and owner of the *San Diego Transcript*, which her father had acquired in the early 1900s. After the family sold the newspaper, she headed to UCSD for an undergraduate degree and never stopped, earning a doctorate under Chodorow's tutelage.

If research into millennium-old economies seems arcane, think again. Hornaday said that in the middle ages, a well-defined culture and economic culture was falling apart and a new one was taking its place. The same is happening today, with attendant barbarity and cruelty accompanying the shift in economies.

Hornaday is still going strong; she is working on a new book. (She still refers to Chodorow, a historian of medieval law, as "my teacher;" although she refuses to disclose her age, I suspect she is an octogenarian, some decades older than her mentor.)

San Diego has a bunch of people like Hornaday; a recent story in *The San Diego Union-Tribune* described Jacqueline Bacon, who has recently published a new book about the first African-American newspaper, as an independent scholar.



About 75 of these free-wheeling intellectuals belong to San Diego Independent Scholars, which this year is celebrating its 25th anniversary. I'm one of the newer members. A quick disclaimer: I'm not a scholar in the strictest sense. My education stopped at an MA; I've never been associated with a university as a faculty member, never did academic research. I'm a plain-Jane journalist. My favorite picture of myself is interviewing a source, head bent, listening intently, taking notes. That's what I do: listen. Now, however, I've got a duly researched and footnoted book about to be published by an academic press (though in its mass trade division), so I guess I'm technically a scholar.

I found SDIS by accident, at a big cocktail party downtown that brought together alums from several schools who live in San Diego; I was in the sizeable NYU contingent. There I met Sandra Joss, an Australian native who had worked at George Washington University.

She too, is not a scholar, strictly speaking, but after 25 years of work at the World Bank, she acquired a PhD in anthropology, and then went back to her home country to do research on Australian aboriginal art, for a book in progress. I went to Sandra's talk and slide show on her subject at an SDIS meeting.

Around the room, most of the heads were white or gray, but the discussion was lively, easy-going, free of tension and rich with shared observations on aboriginal arts around the world that many had either experienced or studied.

I was hooked and joined up.

Stanley Chodorow, who helped SDIS get established, said that independent scholars are not dabblers. Rather, because of their unique position, they can make real contributions. Their success comes in part from being outsiders. They are not faculty members, so without the pressure of teaching, they can focus on research.

More importantly, the independent scholar is not subject to the academic intellectual and career imperatives, especially remaining in the mainstream of scholarly thought, without risk-taking. Finally, like Hornaday, the independent scholar can bring a perspective from life experience that advances understanding.

Still, the world of academe is important for independent scholars. When the founders approached Chodorow for help, they asked for a few basic tools: library privileges, especially borrowing and access to inter-library loans, and connections to UCSD. He felt that the university, as a public institution, had an obligation to the public, to these serious scholars, and that as an intellectual community, the university would benefit.

Library cards in hand, the independent scholars took off, working on their projects and expanding their organization's activities.

The group invites speakers for its monthly meetings. Some are members, like Victor Ramirez, an attorney, former Congressional candidate, and retired judge, who recently talked about the

impact of the Patriot Act on citizens' ordinary lives. SDIS also provides small research grants for members. Delina Halushka received this year's grant for her new book on the oral tradition of Bolivia's Quechua Indians.

SDIS has put independent scholars on the national map. In 1986, the San Diego group spearheaded a conference here that led to the formation of the National Coalition of Independent Scholars. The Coalition today has affiliates in communities across the country, such as Washington, Princeton, Raleigh/Durham, San Francisco, and New Haven -- and in Vancouver.

SDIS has several study groups. A works-in-progress group reads members' manuscript, an invaluable service. A literature group functions as a kind of book club. The Colloquy Café meets simply to talk about subjects of mutual interest.

Beatrice Rose runs the science group, which is currently reading and talking about the brain and how it functions. They don't write books or papers, they're just still learning --for the hell of it. "We enjoy meeting, exploring each other's minds. It keeps us very happy," Rose, said.

A retired physician and professor of public health, Rose also tutors eight Pacific-rim students. She is 92, and many of the original founders are in their 80s and 90s. Joss, who is the membership chairman, said that the group is looking to recruit younger independent scholars, who, like her, are in their 50s and 60s or younger.

Conditions for independent scholars have changed. Chodorow said that many of the original members were spouses of faculty members who were well educated and wanted to continue their work but for whom career opportunities were limited. For example, Joy Frieman, one of the prime movers for SDIS arrived in San Diego from Princeton when her husband Edward was named director of the Scripps Institute. Today, career opportunities for spouses in universities and corporations are more plentiful, and they don't have the freedom for independent scholarship.

SDIS meets at 1:30 p.m. every third Saturday (except July, August and December) in Room 111A in the Chancellor's complex on the UCSD campus. Membership is open to serious researchers, although advanced degrees are not required. The group is still constructing a web site, so for more information, contact SDIS's president, Cathi Blecki, at 760-603-8930.

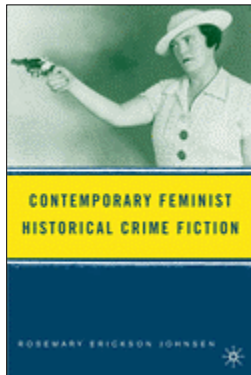
Cathy Robbins' book, "All Indians Do Not Live in Teepees (or Casinos)" will be published by the University of Nebraska Press. She is a freelance writer in San Diego.

Editor's Note: "*Scholars Beyond University Walls*," by Cathy Robbins, was originally published by [voiceofsandiego.org](http://voiceofsandiego.org) on May 21, 2007, and reprinted with permission. For further information, visit their web site at [www.voiceofsandiego.org](http://www.voiceofsandiego.org).

# Miscellaneous 'Mindings & Musings

Member **Marcella Tarozzi** has a new book of aphorisms, published in Italian. The book is entitled “*D’un tratto--Aforismi*,” which could be translated “All of a Sudden,” or “In One Stroke.” The publisher is Joker, from Novi Ligure (Italian), 2006.

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Member **Rosemary Erickson Johnsen** has a new book published, in which she mentioned NCIS and the NCIS web site in the acknowledgements. This is one more way to get the word out about NCIS!

*Contemporary Feminist Historical Crime Fiction*  
Published by Palgrave Macmillan  
August 2006

For more information about the book, go to  
<<http://www.palgrave-usa.com/catalog/product.aspx?isbn=1403972788>>.

The web site includes a brief author bio and comments of readers.

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Member **Thomas M. Adams** recently presented a draft of Part III of his book *Old Regime Group*. The book is about a group of French historians that meets in the Washington-Baltimore area.

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## Book discounts for NCIS members

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NCIS president Janet Wasserman negotiated a book discount for the Schubert Society of the USA and asked the marketing director of University of Rochester Press if she would extend the same discount to NCIS members. The marketing director agreed and forwarded a special flyer with a reference code number.

See the enclosed flyer from the publisher for complete information.

Members are encouraged to make suggestions in this vein with their publishers when their books are published.

# JSTOR: Scholarly Journal Archive or Digital Cloister?

## AN OPEN LETTER TO JSTOR

*The author, non-NCIS member, gave us permission to publish this letter in full. - Editor*

Dear JSTOR,

As an independent scholar not currently affiliated with any academic institution, I find it deeply frustrating that one cannot even pay for access for JSTOR. The mission statement of your Mellon Foundation-funded “not-for-profit” scholarly database says you seek “to improve dramatically access to these journals.” The only thing dramatic about access to JSTOR’s journals is its bizarrely unnecessary lack thereof.

Why can’t one access this highly valuable database with a laptop and a credit card? Why build a digitized scholarly archive, searchable via the public Internet, if access to it is controlled like some kind of top-secret database? Is this for university students and teachers only? If so, why? Is the access to online-searchable scholarship in a digital age to be reduced to only the years that one is actually affiliated with a large educational institution? What year is this: 2007 or 1007? In an age when the Internet has made it not just possible but increasingly common for independent scholars to work outside the ivory tower, JSTOR is clearly designed to lock them out. And this seems just plain wrong.

Peripatetics like Sophocles and Confucius would not be able to access JSTOR, no matter how famous they were, unless they forked over tens of thousands of dollars to officially “join” academe. Even if Sophocles and Confucius had Amex, Visa or Paypal, they would still be outside your club. The would-be self-taught Eric Hoffers of America – scholars whose very vibrancy might arise from their being outside academe – are locked out in the cold. Unless they enjoyed the luxury of being able to drive or fly miles and miles to the nearest major library or college with access. Isn’t this just throwing pointless more tons of carbon into our biosphere? “It’s digital, stupid!” I want to scream. Why do I have to drive somewhere to access a digital archive? (If this isn’t some kind of “global warming” misdemeanor, it ought to be.)

And, in case you didn’t notice, America’s public libraries are not exactly keeping “working class” hours these days. The nearest JSTOR access point to me is the Mighty San Francisco Public Library, which is open on Sundays for a quaintly cosmetic four hours. Forgive me for being thick, but wasn’t the digital age supposed to increase access to stuff? (I could swear I heard Bill Gates say something to this effect. Or maybe it was Captain Kirk.)

Your “mission” – not to mention the wealth of your funders – stands on the shoulders of independent educators, scholars and academic innovators who would not be welcome in your club were they alive today. Indeed, the libraries, universities and scholarly organizations that feed many of the journals in your database owe a great debt to thousands of independent educators and scholars stretching at least as far back to the Chautauqua and Lyceum movements of the 19th century, most of whom spent a great deal of their energy trying to bring educational tools and resources to the greatest number of Americans, not to lock them up behind exclusive walls.

## Forbidden Cities

The first time I encountered JSTOR, I was in Beijing. I had just interviewed the 64-year-old writer/director Guo Baochang – a renowned and beloved cultural icon in China – about his new film, *Dream of the Bridal Chamber*. In this film, Guo was attempting to spur the reassessment – if not resurrection – of Peking Opera as a viable 21st-century art form. Mr. Guo is a Peking Opera aficionado whose love affair with this art form began in his youth, which straddled the 1949 Revolution. As a teenager, he boasted one of the most authoritative collections of Peking Opera literature and playbills in the entire city; he frequented Peking Opera performances with the same enthusiasm and obsession as some baseball-obsessed Brooklyn kid might haunt Dodgers games; his collection of Peking Opera books and paraphernalia were once so coveted by the city's leading opera gazette, they tried to pay him for his collection. Twice. He refused. (Sadly, the Cultural Revolution would soon take it all away forever.)

For the article I was writing on Mr. Guo's new film, my taped interviews with him were, of course, priceless. Since I was unfamiliar with Peking Opera, I did quite a bit of research in Chinese. Naturally, I also looked to see what scholarly materials might be available in English. I really wanted to get some critical context from Western scholars who had written about Peking Opera in English. And I anxiously looked forward to sharing the content of my interviews with any scholars I could find. After searching on Google to locate scholarly writing in American academe on the subject, I found many promising-looking results, written quite recently, and yet every single one of those articles was locked away inside JSTOR. I couldn't access them. I also tried to access a few results on MUSE. Same story. The remaining results findable through Google were garbage.

Time was short, and my deadline was only a few days away. So, I wrote JSTOR and MUSE to ask for options. The answer I received from both databases was (to paraphrase), "Sorry, but you're locked out and we cannot help you access these articles, and have no interest in helping you find an alternative solution. Have a nice day." Frankly, I was flabbergasted. Really. Imagine a big pile of flabber being gasted, and you've got a clear picture of an American writer abroad, surrounded by the digital wonders of the early twenty first century, and not able to do something as simple as pay for some kind of access to a digital library of scholarly journals in his home country.

There I was, just a wee bit north of the Forbidden City, pondering my taped interviews of this old Chinese movie director and Peking Opera aficionado, and not a single digitized scholarly article in English to talk to. JSTOR stood there, like a Great Wall, keeping Inside Scholars securely insulated from Barbarian Scholars outside the Ivory Tower. Oh, well. No big deal, right? I'm sure the Western Peking Opera scholars whose work I couldn't read wouldn't be terribly disappointed. After all, what could I possibly offer them in the way of scholarly dialogue? What intellectual profit could they possibly gain from potential access to fresh interview material with a senior Chinese artist in whose memories the greatest Peking Opera performers, composers and artists of the 20th century are still alive and well?

### And where is the individual in all this?

Comically, there's a page on your site (presumably written under the influence of something better than coffee) which actually uses the phrase "individual participation." I got a good chuckle out of this entertaining little rabbit hole. In fact, it's merely a list of links to a smattering of individual journals with a suggestion that "ya go look fer it yerself!" – *sans* search,

*sans* comprehensiveness, *sans* any digital tools. It merely offers the nifty pre-Internet method of “guess which journal might have what you’re searching for and spend time probably not finding it.” Indeed, JSTOR might do us all a big favor if the “individual participation” page simply included a list of random public telephone numbers; at least this way we might actually reach a human being who could provide us succor and empathy.

### **JSTOR’S “Theft”**

I’d like to suggest the idea that JSTOR is – via Google – stealing from “non-affiliated” searchers of scholarly articles. Stealing what? Stealing our “Search Efforts” (for lack of a better word) and benefiting from what could be viewed as a cynical tactic. Let me explain: JSTOR allows Google’s public search engine to index its articles. And, because of the range of topics covered in academic/scholarly articles (which span a fairly broad spectrum of human thought and activity), JSTOR article search results increasingly come up as first-page results in Google searches on topics of scholarly interest. While this is extremely beneficial to JSTOR, it renders millions of public search results practically worthless to non-JSTOR users. (Imagine Lucy holding the football for Charlie Brown, and you’ve got a pretty clear picture of what JSTOR search results can feel like.)

Every time a non-JSTOR member searches on Google and gets a page of search results, he or she will naturally click on the results that seem most useful to him or her. This provides Google useful feedback, telling Google “I found this result relevant enough to my search query to click on it and try to read it.” Obviously, this will affect how Google ranks search results. If it’s a JSTOR result (which is increasingly the case), this person’s click will result in them being directed to a page which humorously informs them, “nothing to see here.” Now, in addition to being a bit like Lucy yanking the football away just before Charlie kicks it, this is just plain rude. (“You invite me up to your porch and then tell me you don’t serve my kind?”) And if the sucker actually gets fooled by JSTOR’s nifty “individual participation” prank, it could become a full-blown exercise in futility. (Don’t get me wrong. I believe that exercise is an important part of life. It’s just that I’d rather take my exercise by swimming laps in a pool than drowning in swamps of digital red herrings.)

Yet, while this futile clicking is fruitless for the searcher, it is far from fruitless for JSTOR. Indeed, all those clicks create basketfuls of fruit for JSTOR. Because, before JSTOR has had a chance to tell us BE GONE, OH, UNWASHED MASSES!, you’ve already benefited from our hopeless clicking on those search results. Your page-rank, brand presence and advertising budget will all benefit from our naïve desire to find useful information.

At best, you’re wasting a lot of people’s time. At worst, your doing this knowingly, thus polluting Google search results with inaccessible results and stealing valuable time/energy from the public. I can’t see any possible benefit to the greater interests of American scholarship, or to the member journals of your archive. I cannot believe the writers of that scholarship don’t want their work widely read (and referenced in other scholarship), nor can I believe that those journals wouldn’t benefit financially from individual memberships to JSTOR.

### **But, wait! There’s irony (maybe)!**

Now, get this: At the same time you’re utilizing Google’s search results to hoodwink millions of us into visiting a site we can’t even pay our way into, your funder, the Mellon Foundation, has absolutely no qualms about using FREE, OPEN-SOURCE software to power its site. (Just another megawealthy foundation supporting the open source cause, I imagine.) Your

“incubator” uses Plone, an open-source CMS which clearly has saved Mellon money and time on information architecture. (A quick check reveals that another proud JSTOR “affiliate” – Ithaka.org – is also using open-source Plone. I wonder how many of the journals that contribute their content to JSTOR also used open-source solutions. Probably a few.) The open-source nature of software like Plone, as you well know, means that it was developed and improved by potentially hundreds or thousands of open-source user/developers. So while JSTOR may be an elitist cloister, that certainly hasn’t stopped your abbot from enjoying free drinks down at ye olde open-source tavern.

### **Charitable donation, perhaps?**

My local library already told me it can’t afford JSTOR, but when asked if a donated membership might be accepted, they said, “Yes.” So, hoping against hope, perhaps JSTOR, or the Mellon Foundation, would consider donating a JSTOR membership to the San Francisco Bay Area's "Peninsula Library System." We’re located in what, practically speaking, could be considered the northern panhandle of "Silicon Valley."

For many decades, our humble little libraries have helped educate many of the people who work at the same companies that helped develop so much of the gadgetry and software that made possible those databases you’re keeping hidden away in crypts beneath the cloister, safe from the unruly peasantry threatening to read their contents. (Yep, it’s embarrassing to say, but we here in the SF Bay Area are so impoverished we can’t even afford to keep our libraries open after dark, much less afford some fancy new database full of scholarly knowledge.)

If JSTOR needs any PLS library contacts, I’d be happy to provide them to you. Otherwise, these contacts are also findable on something called the World Wide Web, an invention graciously donated by Sir Tim Berners-Lee to the world, for free, presumedly in the interests of advancing humanity's pursuit of knowledge in as democratic a manner as possible.

Sincerely,

Christopher Barden  
San Mateo County, California

*The letter was published at <[www.stingyscholar.com/jstor.html](http://www.stingyscholar.com/jstor.html)>*

*The author can be contacted at <[chris@hutongrobot](mailto:chris@hutongrobot)>.*

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#### Correction:

In the Spring 2007 *TIS* article by John Eastman, *Philosophy, Education, and the Real World: Outline of an Essay on John Dewey*, the following information is provided for clarification:

On page 6, the author cited Breisach, but omitted the reference in the bibliography, page 10. The additional reference should read:

Breisach, Ernst, *Historiography: Ancient, Medieval, & Modern*. Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1983.

On page 9, second column, second paragraph should read “Dewey belongs to the first generation of Americans during the new scientific age when most American universities were just being founded.”



## NCIS Board Elections, 2007

I am happy to announce the results of the election for two new members of the Board. Congratulations to **Ellen Gilbert** and **Shana Penn** as they join the Board of NCIS to begin their first term of service. To **Jo Ann Circosta** and **Elizabeth Jacoway**, we send our appreciation for their willingness to be nominated for the Board.

I send thanks to our Nominating Committee and Tellers for their time and participation: **Bill Engel, Reg Shrader, Jo Ann Circosta, Kati Lynn** and **Tom Snyder**. Jo Ann gets a special vote of thanks because in addition to her committee efforts she volunteered to run in order that we have four nominees on the ballot.

On behalf of the Board and the members, we send our warmest thanks to **Toni Carey** and **Richard Magat** as they leave the Board after years of dedicated service to NCIS. It is our hope that they continue to serve in other capacities. Their commitment to NCIS is an example for us all.

*Janet Wasserman*  
June 2007

## Interim Treasurer's Report

*By Tom Snyder*



Beginning balance 2007	\$39,795.82
Income to date:	\$10,088.21 (including interest income and donations)
Expenses to date:	\$ 6,281.35
Balance on hand:	\$43,603.65 (as of June 5, 2007)

NCIS is fiscally sound, but it is interesting to note the balance difference between the beginning of the year and now is almost exactly made up by the generous donations of our members.

The moral of the story: our new dues structure is bringing in enough money to cover ordinary expenses to date; our donors' generosity will assure our ability to publish *TIS* for the remainder of the year.

*Tom Snyder, Treasurer*

# Book Review

***By David Sonenschein <dsonen@myway.com>***

## **Steven C. Levi, *Midnight***

Seattle: Adventure Books, 2006. Trade paperback, 135 pages, \$9.95. ISBN 978-1-4116-9121-6. Available at <[www.adventurebooksofseattle.com](http://www.adventurebooksofseattle.com)>.



A number of NCIS Members produce, in addition to their scholarly work, creative works such as poetry, fiction, art, sculpture, film, dance, and other forms. One such example is this crime thriller by Steven C. Levi.

Paraphrasing the blurb, the worst storm to hit Alaska in a generation provides the backdrop to the plot wherein a group of mercenaries hijack missiles from a remote Air Force base. They hold a town hostage to their demands, and the short novel takes us through several crises before the somewhat unconventional ending takes place.

Levi is a wide-ranging author and researcher, and in 2005 won the Thatcher Hoffman Smith creativity award from the University of Oklahoma; more can be seen at his web site, <[www.parsnackle.com](http://www.parsnackle.com)>.

We'd like to see more creative work by NCIS members. For books, have the publisher send review copies to David Sonenschein, NCIS Book Review Editor, 1017 Ripley Ave., San Antonio, TX 78212-2708 USA. For other works, send photos and write-ups to me also at the above address, or email me at <[dsonen@myway.com](mailto:dsonen@myway.com)>.

## **Clarification on TIS book reviews**

***By David Sonenschein, NCIS Book Review Editor***

If you have published a book within the last year, do not forget to ask your publisher to send a review copy to me at 1017 Ripley Ave., San Antonio, TX 78212-2708.

Be patient, and sooner or later we'll get a review of it in *The Independent Scholar*.

When the review appears, be sure to make at least two copies and send to your publisher. This is standard professional courtesy, but it will encourage the publisher to consider you again as an author, will encourage publishers to get Independent Scholars in print, and reassure them that their books are getting noticed.

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become bona fide members of NCIS.

### **Deadlines for submitting articles, essays, papers**

February 15  
May 15  
August 15  
November 15

### **Comments and concerns**

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