



DISCOVER SDIS

san diego independent scholars

SCHOLARS NOTEBOOK

May 2019

**May 18 at 1:30 pm
Room 111A,
Chancellor's Complex, UCSD**

Slow Reformation in Martin Luther's Backyard

Around the year 1517 the time was ripe for the Reformation of the Christian Church and Luther's teachings rapidly spread in Germany. The veneration of saints was stopped and paintings and statues of them removed from most churches. The Lutheran parish church in the small town of Themar seemed to have been an exception. A number of "Catholic" looking altar pieces and shrines are on display in it, some of which clearly originated from other houses of worship. The question was where did they come from and how did they survive the 500 years of post-reformation history. A bit of "San Diego independent scholarship" has produced a plausible explanation. It has to do with the personal histories of the local sovereigns, the Counts of Henneberg in the 16th century and lucky breaks in 1634 and 1905.



Mike Seidel

Michael Seidel, SDIS member since 2012, is a retired industrial chemist. He grew up in Germany and graduated in 1951 from the Munich high school which counts Werner Heisenberg and Max Planck among its other famous alumni. In the same year he started studying chemistry in the cellar of the bombed out laboratory building which had been built in the 1930s with money from the Rockefeller Foundation. In 1954 he started graduate school after receiving a Fulbright travel grant and a teaching fellowship at Cornell University where he obtained a Master's

degree. Back at the University in Munich he got a PhD *magna cum laude* in organic chemistry in March 1960. After a postdoctoral year at the University of Illinois he started a 27-year career in the chemical industry in Philadelphia. After retirement he started a company making complex biochemicals for research which he sold after 11 years to retire again. Since that time he has studied history and worked on family research. Mike is a prior winner of the SDIS Helen Hawkins Grant.

SAM GUSMAN

A Life Well Lived

Our former President died April 16 after a stroke. In addition to heading SDIS for four years, 2010-2014, his influence on the organization resulted in two new study groups and increased our membership.

Joining in 2006, his enthusiasm immediately created the Colloquy group, and shortly after, the Culture group. Both still exist. They exemplify Sam's strong belief in and emphasis on participatory, in addition to the usual absorptive, learning. He stressed the importance of talking, in addition to merely listening, of conversation, of sharing various points of view and thus learning from one another.

He will be greatly missed.

Gerry Horwitz

STUDY GROUPS

Colloquy Café

The April discussion of “the worthwhile life” began with two members’ referred to articles by David Brooks in the New York Times, both concerning his latest book, “The Second Mountain.” In the view of the columnist and author, the first “mountain” is what we commonly regard as success—achievement, which results in happiness. But Brooks regards happiness as temporary and thus unfulfilling, as opposed to the more lasting joy, a result of the second “mountain”. This is a state of fulfillment which comes from relationships, from sharing with, helping, working with and serving, others. He believes our culture, which emphasizes the first mountain, needs changing.

So, we asked one another, is what we consider simply a wholesome life enough to be “worthwhile”? One participant said “What about Thoreau? John Muir? Robert E Lee? Van Gogh? Ayn Rand? Nietzsche? John Wilkes Booth?

Who is to judge a life, the self or others? asked another person. Does the sense of worth come from within or without?

A contemporary example of this dilemma is Edward Snowden, who copied and leaked highly classified information from the National Security Agency, revealing global surveillance programs and prompting a cultural discussion about national security and individual privacy.

Charged with theft of government property and violations of the 1917 Espionage Act, Snowden remains in Russia where he has been granted asylum. A worthwhile life? Food for thought, certainly.

In preparation for the next discussion, May 15, participants are mulling over “celebrity.” Back to Brooks’ first “mountain??

Gerry Horwitz

Culture

Culture One's meets next on Thursday, May 9th, 2:00 - 4:00 PM, Signature Rm, Vi. We will be discussing "Part Four of China Rules" (cf. NYT Nov 25, 2018) which examines how "China's Economy Became No. 2 (Superpower) by Defying No.1(US Power)". This reports how Chinese reforms fueled growth and state control resurged within the contemporaneous past. It is a fascinating story.

Our following meeting June 13th, same time and place, deals with the Final "Part Five of China Rules", i.e., "The Road to Confrontation" in which "The U.S. adopts a hard line against China, and an era of engagement recedes into the past".

Film

We will meet Wednesday, May 1 at 10 am to watch *Free Solo*, a 2018 documentary produced by National Geographic, about one man's free solo ascent of El Capital in Yosemite. This film about the 2017 climb has won numerous awards, including Best Documentary Feature at the 91st Academy Awards.

Our April movie was *BlackKkKlansman*. We watched with groans and head-shaking as scene after scene brought back memories of a civil rights era in which injustice and racism were endemic. Director Spike Lee provided an unflinching look at white supremism during this dark period in American history. Based on a memoir by Ron Stallworth, we are taken back to 1970s Colorado Springs, where

This brings us up to very current conditions and the way in which various groups and people are shaping their views and actions.

This ends our formal exposure to the "Parts of China Rules". We'll share our current access to various sources, articles, journals, reports at our July 11th Meeting. This gives us closure on our CHINA PARTS and the possibility of addressing related or newly engaging topics at future group meetings.

Sue Rosner

Stallworth was the first African-American hired by the local police department. Tasked with the role of undercover agent, almost by accident he made telephone contact with the local leader of the Ku Klux Klan, and pretended to be a white supremacist interested in the Klan. He talked a white co-worker into playing him at local Klan meetings. He even developed a phone friendship with David Duke, Grand Wizard of the Klan at that time.

Spike Lee is known as a master of storytelling about disenfranchised people. This is easily his best film and deserves the accolades it has received.

Barbara Heckler

General Relativity

The General Relativity group met on April 10. We finalized our discussion of the Schwarzschild geometry and Spherically symmetric Black Holes. In particular we did a detailed analysis of the "Proper Time" dependence of radial light waves, inside and outside the event horizon, as seen by a radially free falling observer. Two of us quantitatively solved the equations for the full proper time dependence and independently got

the same answer - very satisfying. The next meeting will take place on May 9, same time and place. We will be moving on to chapters 13 and 14 on the three types of Black Holes found or anticipated in nature, evaporation of Black Holes via Hawking radiation, and the effects of the slow rotation of a Black Hole on gyroscopes."

Alvin Halpern

Neuroscience

The next meeting of the Neuroscience Study Group is scheduled for Tuesday, May 21. Our reading assignment in Gazzaniga's book "The Consciousness Instinct" is Chapter 5 "The Beginning of Understanding Brain Architecture" in which the author lays out the case of how architecture is needed to organize structure. Chapter 4 (which I am reading now) is delightfully logical explanation of the role of modules in organizing brain function.

Although we have not discussed it, I am assuming that we will continue

meeting during the summer and will continue our readings in Gazzaniga.

Because the daily papers have so much to report on the progress of AI, I would encourage you to bring what you have read to the meeting for discussion. One of the tantalizing aspects of these reports is that we are very aware that today's news is a slight bump in AI's state of flux. What do we expect? What will we get?

Bea Rose

LOOKING FORWARD

General Meetings

**No Meetings in
June, July, and August**

Next Meeting: September 21

Scholars Notebook

**No Notebook in
June, July and August**

SDIS CALENDAR

Colloquy Café

May 15
1:30 pm

Meetings continue through summer
on 3rd Wednesday
At Vi

Contact: Peter Lisbon
plisbon@san.rr.com

Culture One

May 9
June 13
July 11
2 pm
At Vi

Contact: Sue Rosner
rosnersue@gmail.com

Film Group

May 1
June 5
10 am

No meetings in July & August
At Barbara's home

Contact: Barbara Heckler
bheckler@san.rr.com

General Relativity

May 9
10 am

At John Alexander's home
Contact: Alvin Halpern
alvin.halpern@gmail.com

Neuroscience Group

May 21
2 pm

Meetings continue through summer
At Bea's home at Vi

Contact: Bea Rose
beabe@me.com

Just Lunch

Fall, 2019

Contact: Barbara Heckler
bheckler@san.rr.com

Supper with Scholars

May 2
June 6
6 pm

No meetings in July and August
Humphreys

In the Sheraton La Jolla

Contact: Dave Parker
parkerd1954@gmail.com

General Meetings

May 18, 2019
September 21, 2019

Summer Garden Party and Book Exchange

July date to be determined
Hosted by Gerry Horwitz

President

Barbara Heckler

Send information for

SDIS Notebook to bheckler@san.rr.com

