



**Saturday, October 17, 1:30 pm**

## Sexuality Across the Lifespan

**Touch** – our earliest means of connecting with another human being – remains a vital force throughout life. Yet, educational resources dedicated to important types of touch – romantic and sexual touch – are rarely focused on, especially when directed toward older individuals and persons with chronic disability or illness.

Limited resources, in combination with shame or embarrassment surrounding discussions of sexuality, may prevent individuals from nurturing their sexual health and redefining themselves sexually as they age, face chronic disability or illness.

Dr. Castelloe will review the physical, social and psychological changes that may impact sexuality across the lifespan. She will discuss the unique effects of aging, chronic disability and illness on sexuality, including sexual values, desire, attraction, responses and identity.



**Erin Nissen Castelloe, MD**

Erin Nissen Castelloe, MD, is a California-licensed and American Board of Family Medicine (ABFM) – certified physician, an independent pharmacovigilance consultant, and a comprehensive sexuality educator.

She divides her professional time between clinical research and teaching. She collaborates with organizations that are developing medications for conditions with a few or no treatment options and is currently focused on treatments for Alzheimer disease, achondroplasia, and Prader–Willi syndrome. She warmly welcomes opportunities to connect through her website [www.erinncastelloe.com](http://www.erinncastelloe.com).

**National Coalition of Independent Scholars . . . page 3**

**[NEW: SDIS Voices](#) . . . page 5**



The Scholars Notebook is issued monthly during the academic year, except December, by the San Diego independent Scholars (SDIS), a nonprofit organization founded in 1982.

The mission of SDIS is to promote opportunities for active learning and scholarship, both for its membership and for the San Diego community.

Public service activities of SDIS include: (1) monthly public lectures presented during the academic year; (2) discussion groups held in public libraries or online; (3) small grants awarded on a competitive basis for research projects and (4) various cooperative educational and other projects with local organizations.

More information about SDIS and its activities is available at [www.sdscholars.org](http://www.sdscholars.org). Questions: [sandiegoindependentscholars@gmail.com](mailto:sandiegoindependentscholars@gmail.com)

Members may submit a piece to the Scholars Notebook. Email it by the middle of each month to [sandiegoindependentscholars@gmail.com](mailto:sandiegoindependentscholars@gmail.com)

## *Contents*

- October lecture . . . . . 1
- SDIS Information . . . . . 2
- Our National Organization . . 3
- Writing/Art Project . . . . . 4
- NEW – SDIS Voices . . . . . 5
- Study Group Reports
  - Artificial Intelligence . . . . 6
  - Reading Experience . . . . . 7
  - General Relativity . . . . . 8
  - Film Group . . . . . 9
  - Inside Politics . . . . . 10
  - Colloquy Cafe. . . . . 10
- High Politics and Pandemics 11
- Ballot Proposition Lecture . . 12
- North County Village . . . . . 13
- Calendar; Upcoming Events . 14
- Membership Application . . . 15



## ***National Coalition of Independent Scholars***

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SDIS is the founding chapter of a national (and now international) organization called the **National Coalition of Independent Scholars (NCIS)**. Its website is “ncis.org”.

NCIS currently has eight chapters (properly called “partner organizations”) spread across the U.S., England, France and Australia. Others on the West Coast are:

- IHS, Institute for Historical Study (San Francisco)
- NISA, Northwest Independent Scholars Association  
(Oregon & Washington)

Last month, the officers of NCIS and the Presidents of its partner organizations met and devised new cooperative procedures, including:

**1. The three partner chapters in the Pacific Time Zone have agreed to include each other’s members to their Zoom activities.** Therefore:

- You are invited to the exciting NISA lecture on page 11.
- The President of IHS attended the SDIS lecture on September 19.

**2. Our COVID-19 writing project was extended to include participation by members of NCIS and its partner organizations.**

- Several NCIS members have contributed essays to our project.
- We are exploring the eligibility of certain pieces from our booklet for publication in the journal of NCIS, *The Independent Scholar*, or other publications of its partner organizations.

More information concerning NCIS and the opportunities that it provides for SDIS members will appear in later SDIS newsletters.

Dorothy Parker



## *COVID-19 Writing and Art Project*

- Thanks to the many SDIS members and representatives of other organizations who have participated in this project.
- As we approach the October deadline for manuscript submission, more than 30 pieces have already been contributed, with more promised.
- The varied formats include poetry, essays, narratives, adventure stories, paintings, photography and even one video.
- Some categories of topics involve:
  - Pastimes to stay sane
  - Essays that put COVID-19 into perspective
  - Environment, travel and outdoor adventures
  - Humor
  - History of prior epidemics or plagues
  - Medical issues
- The contributions will be organized in a virtual booklet and gallery, to be celebrated by a gala opening (virtual or ??live??) that may occur near the New Year, to mark the end of 2020.
- All submitted pieces will be archived for posterity.
- If individual authors wish it and the SDIS Board approves, certain writings or artworks may be available for publication elsewhere. We have been exploring this option and have found several possibilities.

## **NEW -- “SDIS Voices”**

A group that discusses a different timely topic each month.

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SDIS Voices, a new SDIS discussion group, was created to help satisfy four goals. First, it serves as a replacement of our monthly supper discussions, which currently cannot meet because of the pandemic. Second, it gives any SDIS member an opportunity to suggest a subject for discussion, since the group’s topic will ordinarily change each month. Third, if a topic might interest another community organization, it can serve as the vehicle for a cooperative venture that brings new viewpoints to SDIS. Fourth, whenever a SDIS member wishes to write a short essay or opinion piece on the discussion topic, that writing can be submitted for inclusion in the SDIS newsletter.

At the first SDIS Voices meeting on Friday, September 25, the topic was “China-America Relationships.” The agenda was based on: (1) information derived from the SDIS general meeting lecture on September 19 by Dr. W. Shi, “Chinese Outward Investment”; and (2) videos kindly suggested by Margaret Seidel and concerning various aspects of Chinese-American interrelationships. The 14 participants also brought their own experiences and knowledge to the table, leading to a spirited discussion. Al Korobkin, who acted as moderator, and Jack Cumming, the Zoom host, used a list of agenda questions and the “Raise Hand” function of Zoom to guide the discussion seamlessly, allowing all persons to have ample time for comments. We learned a lot from each other and had a good time.

The next meeting will be at **1:00 on Friday, October 23, and will concern the health and environmental hazards in San Diego of aerosols, tiny particles or droplets suspended in air and capable of traveling long distances.** Aerosols containing toxins or pathogens can be created by surf action, certain types of building ventilation systems, and other processes. We will be informed by the SDIS lecture at 1:30 on October 17 by Dr. Vicki Grassian, a world expert on aerosols who has studied their production and composition in the San Diego area. For SDIS Voices, we hope to invite several other persons with public health or environmental expertise to discuss the topic with us.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR NOW and JOIN US on Oct. 23.

## **SDIS Science Group -- Artificial Intelligence (AI)**

1:00 p.m., 2<sup>nd</sup> Friday of each month -- next is October 9

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This year, our Science Study Group has been focused on Artificial Intelligence (AI). We are cognizant of --and can dispute--one scientist's claim that "Machine learning is one of the most disruptive innovations of this 21<sup>st</sup> century." Related to that issue, in August we considered the question: "**Can machines think?**"



In September, and following in October, we are considering the ability of AI machines to not only "think," but **to be creative**.

Specifically, we are considering the influence of AI in - writing, music, and painting and sculpture.

At our September meeting, we learned about the writing abilities of a program known as GPT-3--a system with the skill to create meaningful documents after just a little bit of coaching. GPT-3 can create poetry "in the style of..." It can create news stories about current issues, like climate change. Apparently, in response to challenges proposed by its keepers--OpenAI--it is skilled at developing imaginary conversations between historical figures.

How can GPT-3 do this? Researchers fed it "most of the Internet," including Wikipedia, news reports, and some personal items from notable people. The machine uses this material to respond to a researcher's prompt by guessing what words are most likely to come next.

Currently, GPT-3 is the focus of considerable research. It is not out on its own--yet.

In thinking about AI and the arts, we might consider the following:

***What is the definition of art?***

***Noun. The quality, production, expression, or realm, according to aesthetic principles, of what is beautiful, appealing, or of more than ordinary significance.***

***The class of objects subject to aesthetic criteria....***

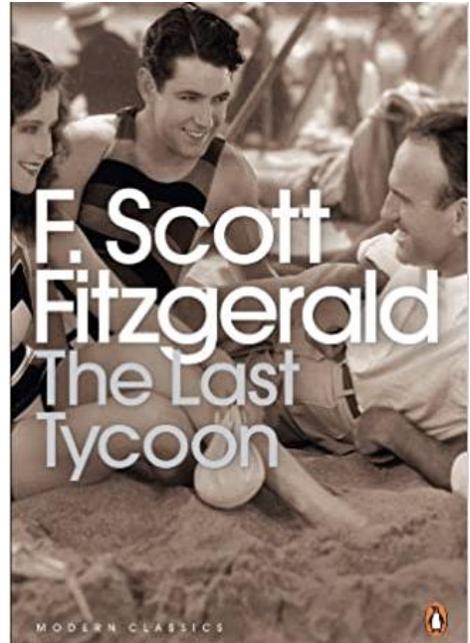
Arlene Gilbert

## Reading Experience – a theme-based reading and study group

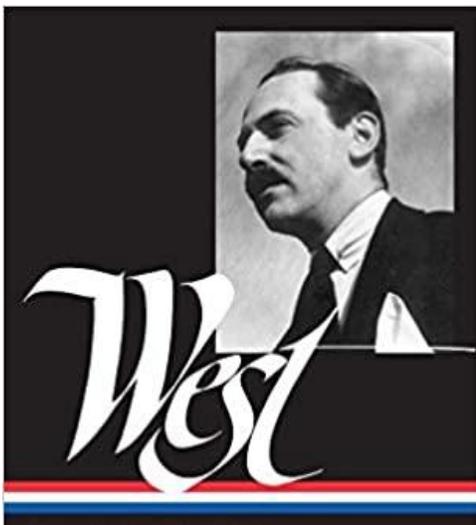
10:00 a.m. on 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of each month -- next is Oct. 19

F. Scott Fitzgerald's unfinished novel "The Last Tycoon", published some ten years after the author's death in 1940, along with his notes for its intended completion, was discussed by this study group at its September meeting. This is the first in the series, "Behind the Silver Screen", which will be concerned with the making of Hollywood films and the expectations they create.

The novel's principal character is based on Irving Thalberg, the so-called boy wonder prince of Hollywood, head of MGM during the early thirties when Fitzgerald met him. Considered the earliest (and lasting) description of the workings of a film studio, the story includes incidents and characters reworked from the author's life and experiences.



After a review of the lives of both Fitzgerald and Thalberg, the group examined the planned ending, the narrator—a fictional character who identifies herself as of the movies but not in them, the interactions of various characters, the author's notes for several to-be-written episodes, and his Images of 1930s Los Angeles. We attempted to answer such questions as whether the partial book as presented fulfills the author's intent and whether we think the novel, completed as Fitzgerald planned, would have been a success.



The October meeting, scheduled for Monday the 19th, will be concerned with Nathanael West's novel, "The Day of the Locust." Gerry Horwitz

From Amazon: "The Day of the Locust" is a celebrated 1939 novel about the Great Depression, set in Hollywood, California and ... dealing with the alienation and desperation of a broad group of odd individuals at the fringe of the movie industry. In 1998, the Modern Library ranked *The Day of the Locust* #73 in its list of the 100 best English-language novels of the 20th century.

## GENERAL RELATIVITY

**10:00 a.m. Wednesdays, biweekly -- next are October 14 and 28**

The General Relativity group met on September 2, 16 and 30. We have been meeting on a biweekly basis over the summer and fall.

The September gatherings were "potluck" meetings where we discussed topics brought up by individual members of the group. The topics included:

- a discussion of the book "**The Ice Age: A very short introduction**", by Jamie Woodward (which may lead to a further in-depth discussion later);



- a brief, but fascinating, introduction to the GPT-3 Artificial Intelligence system and its capabilities (Dorothy Parker);
- a review of climate change evidence and human contributions to it (Alvin Halpern) and
- a report on the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation's just published "Goalkeeper's report", which addresses the world impact of COVID-19, among other topics. (John Alexander).

Further discussion of possible longer-term projects for the group also took place.

Alvin Halpern

## **FILM GROUP: during next 3 months, films directed by women**

10:00 a.m. 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of month -- next is October 7

The Film Group will meet Wednesday, October 7 at 10 am to view *Olivia*, a 1951 drama directed by Jacqueline Audry, based on the 1949 novel by Dorothy Bussy, which was a scandalizing best seller in Britain and France. Bussy had written the book before the War but was discouraged by Andre Gide's criticism of it (he had previously rejected Marcel Proust's *Swann's Way* when he was editor at NRF), for which he later apologized.



Both the novel and film were influenced by Colette's Claudine saga and the film *Madchen in Uniform*. They presented Bussy's own experience as a teenager in a turn-of-the-century girls' school where the teachers seemed to compete for the students' admiration. The American version left out a number of scenes and bore the title, "*The Pit of Loneliness*," perhaps to serve as a warning for prudish moviegoers and as a welcoming signal to those who had appreciated the similarly titled novel by Radclyffe Hall (1928).

September's film was the 2019 independent comedy drama, *The Peanut Butter Falcon*, in which the hero is a young Down syndrome man who runs away from an assisted living facility for seniors (the state couldn't find any other appropriate housing). His role is played by Zach Gottsagen, whose mother was advised to institutionalize him because he would never be able to walk or talk.



Instead, he went to public school and dreamed of becoming an actor. Gottsagen spent many summers attending camp at Zeno Mountain Farm in Vermont, where part of the program includes a film studio. Zack was in Los Angeles helping with a documentary project of Zeno Farms, where he met two filmmakers and told them of his dream to be a movie star. After many discussions, he convinced them to write a script in which he would star. After 5 years of writing and searching for financial backing, the film was made with Zack as its star.

The film became the sleeper-hit of 2019.

Barbara Heckler & Ken Krauss

## INSIDE POLITICS

**A non-partisan discussion of  
political and societal issues**

10:00 AM, 1<sup>st</sup> Sat. of month  
– **next is October 3**

Our SDIS Inside Politics study group met by Zoom on the first Saturday in September, as the group's participants anxiously awaited the first of the three presidential debates in the evening of September 28. This first debate is similar to the Super Bowl, in that most of the country gathers around their television sets to watch the two political gladiators meet for the first time, face to face.

I do not know whether such a debate tells us which candidate will make the best President of the United States, but it is certainly guaranteed to score sky high ratings on the Nielsen charts. I will be watching the debate, that is for sure. President Trump always gets huge ratings, and many viewers will also be tuning in to see how Joe Biden performs outside of the basement of his Delaware home.

Al Korobkin

## COLLOQUY CAFE

1:30 PM, 3<sup>rd</sup> Wed. of month  
**next is October 21**

September's subject was "**divorce**", which resulted, as anticipated, in a lively conversation. The individual who had suggested it as our focus began the session with his reasons for wanting to discuss it: curiosity about the various aspects of dissolving a marriage— about why, about how the partners discuss it, and about how the final decision comes about.

In an attempt to answer some of these questions, another person enthralled those present by relating the story of her own divorce: her six-year courtship, 21-year marriage, and her decision to end it.

Attendees agreed that, though long considered scandalous, ending a marriage is now generally acceptable and made easier because women are no longer dependent. Societal changes have taken women out of the home and made them wage earners.

Requirements for maintaining a strong marriage were stated by various participants as respect for one another's dignity, a strong love, and maturity.

Early in the discussion, another member of the group offered the additional thought that the concept of "divorce" can apply to other situations than marriage, but this use of the word aroused only surprise and no further interest.

At the October meeting, Wednesday the 21st, the group will confront "**self-deception.**"

Gerry Horwitz

# High Politics and Pandemic Predictions:

## The Swine Flu Fiasco of 1976

Wednesday, September 30, 7:30 pm

**Barbara Canavan, Ph.D.**

**Lecture sponsored by the Northwest Independent Scholars Association\***

Since the first isolation of the influenza virus in the 1930s, experts have attempted to predict pandemics based on virus characteristics, natural cycles, or both. As early as 1952, the World Health Organization researchers watched for any changes in circulating flu viruses to forecast the next pandemic. Archival documents reveal that by the 1970s predictive theories of pandemic influenza had become entrenched in dialog among scientists and from them to politicians and the public. Confident of their ability to forecast the next pandemic, public health officials in the United States warned that a global flu pandemic was looming. This resulted in the largest mass vaccination campaign in the United States up to that point. The pandemic never materialized and there were serious side effects to the vaccine. Collectively, these events became known as the infamous Swine Flu Fiasco.

Barbara Canavan's's current research focuses on the history of disease and human pandemics. As part of her PhD studies, Barbara had a fellowship at Columbia University in 2011 for the Hertog Global Strategy Initiative in **"History and Future of Pandemic Threats and Global Public Health."**

As the former director of a public health informatics program in Oregon, Barbara participated in national research on immunization and disease. More recently, she served as a medical historian; designed and taught a History of Medicine course at Oregon State University; and presented lectures to Oregon public health on **"The Age of Pandemics: Microbes at the Human-Animal Interface."**

**For Zoom link: see this newsletter's cover email message to SDIS members.**

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\***The Northwest Independent Scholars Association** (NISA) is, like SDIS, a chapter of the National Coalition of Independent Scholars, of which SDIS was the founding chapter. Because NISA, which serves Oregon and Washington, is also in the Pacific Time Zone, we have decided to invite our members to each other's Zoom-based activities. For more information, see <http://www.northwestindependentscholars.org/>

# *November 2020 Ballot Propositions*

Mary Hanson, *League of Women Voters*

Oceanids Sounding Board Presentation

Thursday, October 1, 2020, 12 pm

**For Zoom link: see this newsletter's cover email message to SDIS members.**



**Mary Hanson**

Don't vote this November until you hear about the pros and cons of the ballot propositions from Mary Hanson, representing the League of Women Voters Speakers' Bureau. Mary will be discussing the propositions on the ballot for the upcoming election. Even though the League often takes positions on ballot propositions and proposed legislation (although not on candidates) the League makes every effort to be impartial and nonpartisan in these pro/con presentations.

Mary has been involved in the League at the local, county, and state levels for many years, having served as the San Diego President from 1983-85. Mary is a retired French teacher who has also been active in the San Diego community. During her long tenure at Santana High School, she led students six times on trips to France, always an adventure. She received her B.A. in French and Russian from the University of Iowa and her M.A.T. in French and Education from Oberlin College. Mary was on the board of the La Jolla Chamber Music Society for several years and is a longtime member of the Third Thursday book group. She is also active in UCSD Oceanids, having served as president from 2013 to 2015, and is currently on the board as the corresponding secretary.

## ***North County Events Open to SDIS Members:***

Even before the pandemic, several SDIS members living in North County found it difficult to attend events in La Jolla because of traffic congestion, time constraints or other factors. To better meet their needs, SDIS has established a cooperative relationship with North County village (NCV), a non-profit grassroots organization that emphasizes interdependent, help-each-other living. The goal of NCV is to make aging at home easier.

NCV and SDIS have agreed to allow each other's members to visit their activities during a trial cooperative period. All NCV events currently are offered on Zoom.



### **North County Village (NCV)**

#### **North County Village Activities for October 2020:**

10/2 – Happy Hour 4:00 RSVP Jack – [jek123@msn.com](mailto:jek123@msn.com)

10/13 – Film Club – 3:30 – “Two for the road” RSVP Jack–  
[jek123@msn.com](mailto:jek123@msn.com)

10/15 – Memoir Writing – 2:00 – RSVP Rigdon - [rigdoncurrie@mac.com](mailto:rigdoncurrie@mac.com)

10/21 – Book Club – 3:30 – book TBD – RSVP Jack– [jek123@msn.com](mailto:jek123@msn.com)

10/31 – Halloween Happy Hour – 4:00 – RSVP Jack– [jek123@msn.com](mailto:jek123@msn.com)

## October 2020

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
			Sept 30 Politics & Pandemic 7:30 pm	1 Ballot Propositions noon	2	3 Inside Politics 10 am
4	5	6	7 Film Group 10 am	8	9 Artificial Intelligence 1:00 pm	10
11	12	13	14 General Relativity 10 am	15	16	17 Sexuality Lecture 1:30 pm
18	19 Reading Experience 10 am	20	21 Colloquy Cafe 1:30 pm	22	23 SDIS Voices 1:00 pm	24
25	26	27	28 General Relativity 10 am	29	30	31

### Upcoming Monthly Public Lectures

(For the October lecture, see page 1.)

1:30 pm, November 21: TBD.

1:30 pm, January 16: TBD.

1:30 pm, February 20: **Current Scientific Results on Alzheimer's Disease**  
**Jerold Chun, M.D., Ph.D.** Sanford Burnham Prebys Institute

Next SDIS Board Meetings: 10 am, 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesdays, October 6 and December 1

# SDIS New Member Form and Optional Library Card Form

UCSD Library Cards: (Temporarily unavailable until the COVID-19 pandemic abates.)

- If you are 65 or over, affiliation with SDIS entitles you to a discounted UCSD Library card, with Level 2 (graduate student) privileges, except for inter-library loans.
- Your SDIS library card is \$25 with this membership form. SDIS will match your \$25. That is, for cards acquired at this time, UCSD charges SDIS \$50.

Tax-Deductible Contributions to SDIS are encouraged and welcome . Your dues also tax-deductible.

**MEMBERSHIP:** Dues paid in September through March apply to the current fiscal year (Sept-Sept). Those paid from April through August also apply to the subsequent year.

PLEASE provide ALL information for our Directory. Print, or write very clearly.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work/Alt Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Field(s) of Interest, (maximum of three)

**APPLICATION FOR OPTIONAL UCSD LIBRARY CARD**

Effective for Academic Year Beginning October 1 (Because of COVID-19, no new cards can be purchased until the library's physical facilities reopen. Indicate interest but do not pay for a card now.)

I assume responsibility for lost, damaged, or overdue materials borrowed on my UCSD/SDIS library card:

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**PAYMENTS**

Make checks payable to SDIS. Please mail entire form with payment(s) to  
David E. Parker, 8773 Caminito Abrazo, La Jolla, CA 92037

<b>Tax Deductible SDIS Dues</b> (\$40/single, \$55/couple)	\$ _____
UCSD Library Card (Optional - \$25; do not pay now)	\$ _____
<b><u>Tax Deductible Contributions</u></b> (Optional)	
Operations	\$ _____
Helen Hawkins Research Fund	\$ _____
Jane Ford Book Fund	\$ _____
<b>TOTAL ENCLOSED</b>	<b>\$ _____</b>