



Scholars Notebook

San Diego Independent Scholars (SDIS)

March 2021

Saturday, March 20 at 1:30 p.m., by Zoom

Some Marvelous Discoveries in Modern Astronomy



Monte Marshall, PhD

Professor Emeritus
San Diego State University

Biography: As a fourth-generation San Diegan, I attended St. Augustine High School and then headed east to Philadelphia to Villanova University, where I majored in philosophy and minored in astronomy. Upon returning to San Diego, I enrolled at SDSU as an astronomy major. During my first semester I happened to take an intro geology class, where I had such an inspiring prof that I changed my major to geology and geophysics!

(continued page 2)

Abstract: This talk will explore some recent and wonderful discoveries in astronomy. We will begin with the more than 4000 planets around other stars, called exoplanets, discovered mostly by the famous Kepler space telescope. Then we will examine what the Hubble space telescope has shown us about the birth and death of stars.

It's in the stellar interiors that all the elements in the periodic table from helium up to iron are formed. And when massive stars explode into supernovas, they produce even heavier elements. But it's the collisions of neutron stars and black holes that produce most of the very heavy elements like gold, platinum, and uranium. These collisions were first discovered several years ago by the minute contraction and expansion of mile-long laser beams as the gravity waves from the collision swept across the earth's surface.

Finally, we will explore two concepts currently at the top of the astronomical hit-list—dark matter and dark energy. Both are invisible, the existence of both is controversial, but they are used to explain observable phenomena such as the rule-breaking speed of galactic rotations, multiple images of the same galaxy in the same photograph, and a universe that is expanding more and more rapidly.



Monte Marshall (continued)

My PhD thesis at Stanford was on the magnetic properties of seafloor basalts. I then worked at the US Geological Survey for 4 years before returning to San Diego and SDSU, where I was a professor for almost 30 years.

I taught courses in geophysics, structural and petroleum geology, and paleomagnetism and plate tectonics. The research I conducted with my students was on the faults of metropolitan San Diego and the plate tectonics of southern California. On three sabbaticals, I lived, taught, and did research at universities in France, Russia, and the Czech Republic.

I retired in 2005 and have been busy doing geological community service, writing papers on the geologic history of the Southwest, and travelling. Several years ago, I saw the total solar eclipse up in Oregon and those few minutes really revived my interest in astronomy!

✓ **Learn about the National Coalition of Independent Scholars, NCIS.** (Page 4-5)

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Information: San Diego Independent Scholars

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. Questions: sandiegoindependentscholars@gmail.com

Members may submit a piece to the Scholars Notebook. Email it by the middle of each month to sandiegoindependentscholars@gmail.com

SDIS Board, 2020-21

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Do you know about NCIS?



The San Diego Independent Scholars was instrumental to the creation in 1989 of a national -- now international -- organization called the National Coalition of Independent Scholars (NCIS). Since that beginning, SDIS and NCIS have worked together to foster independent investigation in diverse fields of study, from the humanities to science to social studies to the fine arts.

NCIS membership comes in two flavors. Full membership (\$50/year) is appropriate for persons who are pursuing scholarly activities but are not currently associated with an academic institution in a tenure track position. Associate membership (\$40/year) is extended to individuals who are interested in learning and intellectual questions, although they are not necessarily involved in research.

Association with NCIS confers several benefits. These include opportunities for: (a) increased networking with others pursuing similar activities, (b) rate reductions for copyediting, translation and other services, (c) discounts for various research tools, (d) travel and research grants, (e) the chance to publish in the peer-reviewed, open-source journal “The International Scholar” (TIS), (f) the option of having a book reviewed in TIS and (g) other help listed at [Membership Benefits | THE NATIONAL COALITION OF INDEPENDENT SCHOLARS \(ncis.org\)](https://www.ncis.org/membership-benefits). Benefits of full and associate membership differ somewhat, as outlined on the next page of this newsletter.

Besides SDIS, the partner groups that together comprise NCIS are the Institute of Historical Studies (centered in San Francisco and Berkeley), Minnesota Independent Scholars Forum, Princeton Research Forum, Northwest Independent Scholars Association (in Oregon and Washington primarily), Independent Scholars’ Association of Australia, Independent Researchers in France, and the Forum for Independent Research Endeavours in England. In addition, NCIS is open to independent researchers from any country.

In this era of international conferences and Zoom meetings, the affiliation of SDIS with NCIS widens our forum for discussion and cooperation. This relationship can help us expand the global perspectives of our study and discussion groups, as well as increasing the scope of more formal research.

During the past year, the board of NCIS has reached out to SDIS and other partner groups in an unusually positive way. I look forward to increased cooperation with NCIS in the future. In fact, I am applying for NCIS membership.

Dorothy L. Parker, SDIS President

NCIS BENEFITS	FULL MEMBER	ASSOCIATE MEMBER	PARTNER GROUP MEMBER
Eligible for NCIS Conference Travel Grants (https://www.ncis.org/grants)	After 18 months' continuous membership		
Eligible for NCIS Research Support Grants (https://www.ncis.org/grants)	After 18 months' continuous membership		
Eligible for the Elizabeth Eisenstein Essay Prize (\$350 p.a.)	X	X	
Eligible for external grants administered by NCIS	X	X	
Discounted JPASS (for journal access through JSTOR)	X	X	
Discount on Nota Bene referencing software	X	X	
Discounts on Professional Writing and Translation Services	X	X	
Personalized Member web page	X	X	
E-mail Address (@ncis.org)	X	X	
NCIS Business cards (English, French, Spanish, others on demand)			
Listing in the NCIS searchable member directory	X	X	
Use of the NCIS Member logo	Use of "Member" logo	Use of "Member" logo	
Letters of Introduction for entry to libraries and archives	X	X	
Eligible to have own books reviewed (reviews published in TIS)	X	X	X
Eligible to submit manuscripts to The Independent Scholar (TIS) journal	X	X	X
Discussion groups on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and H-Scholar	X	X	X
Eligible to present paper at NCIS-sponsored conferences	X	X	
Funding for local, regional and national Partner Group meetings			X
\$10 introductory discount on NCIS individual membership (only on first year of Full or Associate membership)			X

To Contact NCIS -> website: www.ncis.org; General inquiries: info@ncis.org
Book Review Editor: Reviews@ncis.org Grants/Awards: Grants@ncis.org
Partner Group Liaison: Partners@ncis.org Membership: Membership@ncis.org
Treasurer: Treasurer@ncis.org Benefits: Benefits@ncis.org .

Colloquy Cafe

now 2:30 p.m., 3rd Wednesday of month -- **next is March 17**

The enthusiastic discussion of “*class*” occurred on the fourth Wednesday of January rather than the usual third Wednesday, thus too late for that month’s newsletter. Here’s a brief summary:

In England one’s speech reveals one’s social stratum and becomes one way to identify people. Considered snobbish because the notion of “*class*” separates and ranks individuals rather than uniting them, we Americans like to think the concept is undemocratic and yet we do classify others in many ways. Is this instinctive?, we asked ourselves.

One member mentioned “My Fair Lady” as an example of the English system. Professor Higgins transforms Eliza from a humble flower-seller with no knowledge of manners, refinement or proper speech into a “lady” with vocabulary, accent, manners, style and even sensitivity to match; she cannot return to her former occupation and associates. In fact, she has nowhere to go but back to Higgins. In the beginning she—at the bottom of society—has no class but in the end she also has, in a different sense, no *class*—she is now beyond it.

In February we went from “*class*” to a consideration of “*religion*.”

The member who suggested we discuss this concept told the group that she began to question religion at age 14, asking how to recognize truth. After being assured by a minister that certain statements were indeed true, she again questioned: Can one be religious if one does not believe in God? She was again reassured, but in adulthood now believes that *religion* has to do with how one treats others and identifies herself as a religious atheist. Another member recalled being assured by a rabbi that yes, he could be Jewish without believing in an omnipotent God.

Religion was defined by the group as a moral code governing the ethics and values that rule our lives. Another member said that heaven and hell were inventions of early man in order to control the behavior of his fellows. Nods of agreement followed. Prayer, someone commented, consists of asking for something. And still another person added that man is the only member of the animal kingdom capable of examining creation from outside it.

That discussion led us to the selection of *wisdom* for our March 17 topic. Colloquy Cafe meetings will henceforth begin at 2:30 rather than the previous earlier hour.

Gerry Horwitz

Documentaries by Ken and Faye

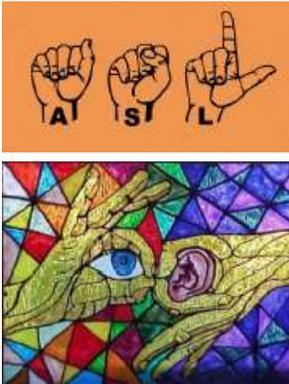
12:30 every Saturday - next is March 6

- To get on the list for announcements and Zoom info, contact KMW@ucsd.edu

- **Some presentations in February are shown below.**



Houseboats --
Feb. 13



Culture of the Deaf
Feb. 20



**Xin
Jiang
Province
of China**

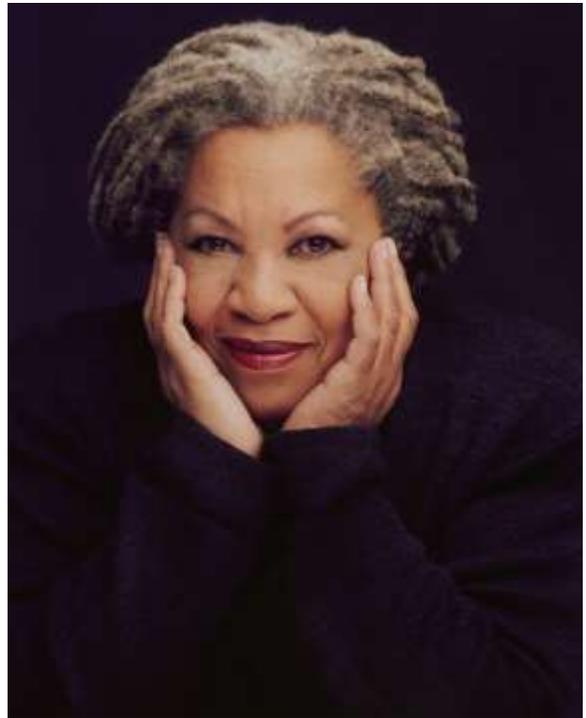
Feb. 27



FILM GROUP

10:00 a.m., 2nd Wed of month for this month only -- **next is March 10.**

The film group will meet on Wednesday, March 10 at 10 am to view *Toni Morrison: The Pieces I Am*, a 2019 documentary which was released a few months before her death at age 88. Morrison was interviewed extensively for this film. We are also treated to many photos and clips of interviews from her past. She was an editor at Random House, a professor at Princeton and an award-winning author...she won the 1988 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction for *Beloved* (published in 1987) and the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1993. This is a powerful documentary, made even more special with many of her own words.



Our February screening of Elaine May's first film, *A New Leaf*, brought great laughter to the group's viewing experience with the physical comedy of Walter Matthau and May herself in the lead roles. The dialogue, written with much of the



seemingly non-sequitrial wit May displayed in her sketches performed with her former comedy partner, Mike Nichols, was consistently hilarious. Instead of silencing the audience's reactions, we left the Zoom sound on to encourage the ongoing chortling, which made the event memorable in the midst of the pandemic. We felt we had perhaps discovered a panacea.

Ken Krauss and Barbara Heckler

Inside Politics

10:00 a.m., 1st Saturday of month
next is March 6

The Inside Politics Zoom Study Group met on February 6, 2021. We all knew the Second Trump Impeachment Trial was commencing the next week, so we decided to spend considerable time discussing what promised to be a history making event. The Democrats knew a conviction was unlikely because the Constitution requires a two thirds vote for conviction but proceeded with the trial anyway because they wanted to hold Trump accountable for the riot at the Capitol on January 6.

We commenced the Study Group Meeting by analyzing the main arguments the House managers were expected to put forward to convict Trump, and the main arguments Trump's attorneys were expected to use to acquit Trump. Other Agenda topics related to the trial included whether Trump actually knew there were plans to storm the Capitol, and whether protestors who attended the rally but did not storm the Capitol should be blamed for the chaos which ensued.

The meeting also spent time discussing the new GOP Congresswoman Marjorie Taylor Greene, who had just been removed from two committees by the House of Representatives for espousing conspiracy theories prior to being elected to the House.

Other subjects included the Covid Relief Bill which remains stuck in the Congress, and whether Gavin Newsom will be recalled as Governor of California. We were also happy to welcome a few new members to our political discussion family.

Be sure to read next month's SDIS Notebook to read about the lively discussion expected to take place at the March 6 Study Group meeting regarding the fireworks which took place at the Impeachment Trial.

Al Korobkin
akorobk1@san.rr.com

Physical Science Group

2:00 p.m. Thursday, biweekly --
next is Thursday Mar. 4, 2 p.m.

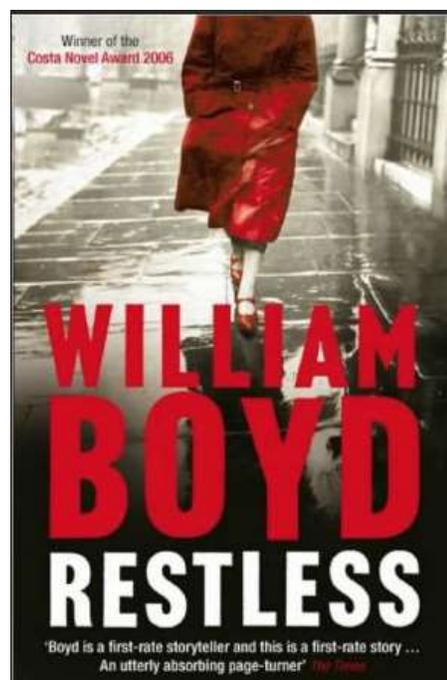
"The Physical Sciences Group met on Feb 18 at 10am. We reviewed several homework problems in Griffiths chapter 3, including problems looking at various relativistic particle scatterings, and using transformations from the lab frame of reference to the Center of Momentum frame of reference to establish energy and momentum constraints on various processes. Our next meeting will be on Thursday, March 4 at 2:00pm - a new time of day. At that time, we will begin work on Griffiths chapter 4, studying symmetries, groups and conservation laws."

Reading Experience – a theme-based reading and study group

10:00 a.m. on 3rd Monday of each month -- next is March 15

February's discussion was quite active. "Warlight" by Michael Ondaatje was the first in the series "**Deception**". The novel focused on two teenagers in 1945 London whose parents left them with a supposed family friend they hardly knew while they departed for a year to Singapore, following demands of their father's career. The children soon begin to discover flaws in what they've been told, and much else.

The March meeting, Monday the 15th at the usual 10 a.m. will examine "Restless" by William Boyd, also focusing on the effects of "**Deception**" upon the deceiver as well as on the deceived. This novel happens during World War II and then some thirty years after, largely in England. Again, a child—this time a grown daughter—discovers her mother is not the person she had believed.



Reading Experience's Zoom sessions are open to any interested SDIS member who wants to discuss a scheduled book. A commitment to *membership* in the group is not necessary, although following the reading plan through at least one theme will result in a richer experience. Past themes have been **Memoir, Friendship, Where & When**, and **Hollywood: Behind the Silver Screen**. For further information, please contact me.

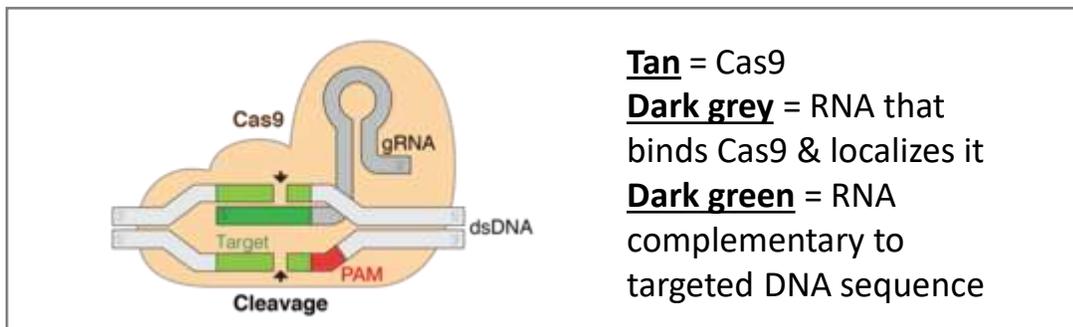
Gerry Horwitz

Science Group

1:00 p.m., 2nd Friday of month -- next is **April 9**
(no meeting in March)

As part of our interest in genetics, our next meeting on April 9 will focus on CRISPR-- a technology that can be used to edit genes. This method finds a specific bit of DNA inside a cell and edits that gene, usually by altering that piece of DNA. However, CRISPR has also been adapted to turning genes on or off without altering their sequence.

CRISPR “spacer” sequences are transcribed into short RNA sequences capable of guiding the system to matching sequences of DNA. When the target DNA is found, Cas9 – one of the enzymes produced by the CRISPR system – binds to the DNA and cuts it, shutting the targeted gene off.



The relationship of CRISPR to species saving or altering has been discussed in an article by Elizabeth Kolbert, “The Control of Nature,” in the January 18, 2021 issue of The New Yorker. Group members will receive links to that article and to a basic article, “What Is CRISPR?” by Aparna Vidyasagar, for discussion.

Any SDIS member who wishes to attend a Science Group session is always welcome. Please contact Arlene Gilbert with your email information so that she can send you the Zoom link for the meeting.

We meet on Zoom, the second Friday of the month. There will be no meeting in March because of scheduling conflicts. The next meeting will be April 9.

Arlene Gilbert

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 March 2021

3/03 – Film Club – 3:30 – “ Their Finest” – RSVP jek123@msn.com

3/16 – Memoir Writing – 2:00 – 2:00 RSVP rigdoncurrie@mac.com

3/17 – St Patrick’s Happy Hour – 4:00 – RSVP jek123@msn.com

3/24 – Book Club – 3:30 – book TBD – RSVP jek123@msn.com

Roman decline, renewal, and how to talk about political change productively

Oceanids Sounding Board

Thursday, March 4, 2021 @ 12 p.m.

Abstract: One of the most common themes that Romans express across more than 1600 years of their history is that their state is in a decline. Often, this is said for opportunistic reasons. In the Republic, ambitious politicians attacked the establishment by promising to end a Roman decline these figures supposedly permitted. Under the empire, new imperial dynasties attacked the figures they replaced by blaming them for Rome's problems. But Romans also sometimes used a different rhetoric that emphasized a collective effort to repair problems in their society. While the rhetoric of decline promoted division, this Roman rhetoric of renewal encouraged cooperation and affirmed the unity of Rome.



Edward Watts, Ph.D.

Chair and Professor,
Department of History UCSD
Alkiviadis Vassiliadis Endowed Chair

Professor Watts' research interests center on the intellectual and religious history of the Roman Empire and the early Byzantine Empire. His first book, *City and School in Late Antique Athens and Alexandria* (University of California Press, 2006), explains how the increasingly Christian upper class of the late antique world used a combination of economic and political pressures to neutralize pagan elements of the traditional educational system. His latest book is titled "Mortal Republic: How Rome Fell into Tyranny" (Basic Books, 2018). In addition to authoring, Dr. Watts has worked in co-editing five other volumes and more than 40 articles.

Link to join: <https://ucsd.zoom.us/j/2392094686>

March 2021

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3	4 Physical Science 2 p.m	5 Oceanids Lecture 12:00	6 Inside Politics 10 a.m. <hr/> Ken & Faye 12:30
7	8	9	10 Film 10 a.m.	11	12	13 Ken & Faye 12:30
14	15 Reading Experience 10 a.m.	16 NCV Memoir Writing 2:00 p.m.	17 Colloquy Cafe 2:30 p.m.	18 Physical Science 2 p.m	19	20 Marvels of Astronomy 1:30 p.m.
21	22	23	24	25	26	27 Ken & Faye 12:30

Upcoming Events

The Science Group's next meeting is April 9. The topic will be CRISPR gene editing: benefits, technology, and possible threats. There is no meeting in March because of scheduling issues.

April 20: General meeting. Dr. E. Watts, History topic TBD.

SDIS New Member Form and Optional Library Card Form

UCSD Library Cards:

- If you are 65 or over, affiliation with SDIS entitles you to a discounted UCSD Library card, 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 are 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/Mobile Phone: _____

Email: _____

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

APPLICATION FOR OPTIONAL UCSD LIBRARY CARD
Effective for Academic Year Beginning October 1

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

Tax Deductible SDIS Dues (\$40/single, \$55/couple)	\$ _____
UCSD Library Card (Optional - \$25)	\$ _____
<u>Tax Deductible Contributions</u> (Optional)	
Operations	\$ _____
Helen Hawkins Research Fund	\$ _____
Jane Ford Book Fund	\$ _____
TOTAL ENCLOSED	\$ _____