

VISTAS LIFELONG LEARNING, INC.

A Nonprofit Education Corporation
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Message from the President

Welcome to VISTAS 2010!

Because the fine First Semester programs are thoroughly described and the Second Semester offerings are previewed elsewhere in this Newsletter, I will devote my message to VISTAS unique position in the world of adult education.

Why is VISTAS different?

We stress "peer-led" education. While we sometimes recruit "outside experts" in areas of interest, we do not get a lot of takers because we do not pay presenters. Members are encouraged to develop and present seminars on subjects of particular interest to them, and they represent the majority of our "faculty." "Teaching" is a great way to "learn."

We are a "stand alone" organization. VISTAS is not affiliated with any college, university, school district, church, or retirement community. I once did an extensive search and found only one other independent lifelong learning organization; and when I tried to make contact, I received no answer. We may be the only unaffiliated group in the country.

The disadvantages to such a position are obvious: no institutional services such as financial management, publicity, printing, mailing, clerical help, audiovisual equipment; no teaching or support personnel; no classroom space; and no "parent" organization to give us visibility in the community.

However, there are also advantages: we have complete control over our curriculum, we don't have to "fit into" an established system, we set our own fees for membership and courses, and we have a Board of Trustees who are all VISTAS members.

VISTAS is largely a volunteer operation. No one is paid for any of the work involved in producing our courses and events with the exception of one part-time employee, the invaluable Marti Mangan, our contract administrator who handles mail, phone, email, records, class rosters, membership lists, and accounting as well as designing and distributing our Newsletters and flyers—and anything else that is sent her way.

I hope you enjoy being a part of this unusual organization, and we welcome your active participation.

Jan O'Dowd
Co-President, VISTAS

VISTAS Winter Social—A Magical Night in Vienna

Sunday, January 31, VISTAS will host "the" event of the Winter Season at the Music Academy of the West: *A Magical Night in Vienna*, a short play by Bernard Gondos. Music will be provided by Bernie Gondos on the violin and Isabel Gallagher on the flute and piano. Our social events are subsidized by VISTAS, so you are encouraged to come, bring prospective members as your guests, and enjoy a memorable afternoon including hors d'oeuvres and beverages. Please call VISTAS at 967-6030, if you plan to attend.

Fall 2009

Understanding Climate Change

Jan O'Dowd

The 2009-2010 VISTAS fall season was launched by Dr. Barbara Levi, physicist, science reporter and editor for *Physics Today*, and consultant to government and academe, who led three sessions on Climate Change. She first dealt with Understanding the Climate System, exploring the basic principles governing our climate and showing how conditions have changed over time. Next she looked at the human impact on climate and how scientists measure historic and modern climate parameters. In the third session she suggested possible ways to mitigate the effects of climate.

Santa Barbara, Its History, Architecture and People

Sue Mellor

Jayme de Barros chose the ideal location to start his program on SB's history and architecture. Using the dramatic murals in the courthouse as his backdrop, he gave a comprehensive review of the historical events shaping our county, followed by Kathi Brewster's slide show on the architectural history. Along with Ethel Scar, we had a tour of the Courthouse. The Covarrubias Adobe was the setting for presentations by Jarrell Jackson and Ann Peterson on the cultural merging of the Californios and Anglos. The seldom-visited archive library of the Mission included a talk by Paulette Hoffman on the historical functioning of the Mission, and a light-hearted review of our city's street names and colorful personalities was given by Neal Graffy. Paulette then led us on an insider's tour of the Mission complex.

Tragic Lives of Great Artists: Van Gogh, Caravaggio and Michelangelo

George Frakes

Wayne Hoffmann, in a return engagement, captivated his large audience in a four-part art history presentation about three famous European artists. Using a combination of PowerPoint visual presentations, lectures, question-and-answer sessions, and costumed two-person role playing, Wayne made the lives and art works of Michelangelo, Caravaggio, and Van Gogh come to life for his audience of artists and VISTAS members. As was the case in Mr. Hoffmann's earlier class on women in art, the audience called for another course in the near future.

Mao

Peter Kruse

In January fourteen VISTAS scholars read *Mao, The Unknown Story*, by Jung Chang and Jon Halliday. Based on newly available historical records in China, Russia and numerous interviews with participants, the book is full of startling revelations. In chasing his dream, Mao caused the death of 38 million people. The purpose of the seminar was to read the book, discuss the contents and consider how it relates to what we thought we knew and an understanding of the events and the lessons we might learn from them. This seminar followed the "all participants must make a presentation" philosophy which is being pursued in small seminars by VISTAS.

Documentary Club

The following documentaries were screened at Maravilla Theater in the fall:

Who Killed the Electric Car? Chris Paine; *Surfwise*, Doug Pray; *The Endurance (2000)*, George Butler; *My Kid Could Paint That*, Amir Bar Lev; *Taxi to the Dark Side*, Alex Bibney; *Why We Fight*, Eugene Jarecki; *Expelled*, Ben Stein; *A State of Mind*, Daniel Gordon; *After Innocence*, Jessica Sanders; *Young @ Heart*, Steven Walker and Sally George.

US Navy in the Pacific—1842 to 1942

Nick DiNapoli, VISTAS own naval historian and illustrator, presented a comprehensive three-week program on the purposes and activities of the US Navy in the Pacific from 1842 to 1942.

Stalin

Peter Kruse

Eighteen VISTAS Scholars are set to spend Tuesday mornings in February in a small seminar based on a new book by Simon Sebag Montefiore, *Young Stalin*. The book focuses on the period from his birth to the Russian Bolsheviks Revolution. This seminar, like *Mao*, will follow the "all participants must make a presentation" philosophy being pursued by VISTAS in small seminars.

Coming Up—Winter 2010

Education Challenges in the 21st Century

Starting Wednesday, February 3, for four meetings, Bob Macy will moderate a distinguished panel of educators on the subject of Education: Funding; Special Education, the Law, the Practice, the Cost; School Reform and Personnel Matters, including School teachers, Unions, Tenure, and Merit Pay.

Ensemble Theatre Play, *Souvenir*

Another group day at the Ensemble Theatre is planned for Sunday, February 14 at 2:00 pm, to be followed by a “talk back” after the performance. The play *Souvenir* is based on a true story about a woman who fancies herself a great opera singer. One problem; she is tone deaf. Through a winning combination of determination and self-delusion, her popularity grows as she moves from small concerts to recordings and, finally, an outrageous sold-out concert at Carnegie Hall. Cost \$28 per person. All ETC subscribers can just transfer to this performance. VISTAS members can arrange for payment of tickets directly with the Ensemble Theatre Company by phone (805) 965-5400.

It's About Time

David Bisno, M.D.

Nothing is more fundamental to our nature than the observation of time and what we choose to do with it. While our subject for this Spring is invisible and indescribable, it is also universally compelling; we will find its study fascinating. But wait a minute. *It's About Time* will include entertaining lectures and spirited discussion. We will find the time to include the associated astronomy, philosophy, psychology, literature, music, biology, physics and the accomplishment of geniuses.

Understanding that time flies but waits for no man, two fascinating paperback biographies are suggested: Dava Sobel's *Longitude* and Clark Blaise's *Time Lord*.

Documentary Film Schedule:

- January 21 *Capturing Reality: the Art of the Documentary Film*
- February 18 *Food, Inc.*
- March 18 A documentary filmmaker will show and discuss her new film
- April 15 *Yes, Madam Sir*
- May 20 *A Walk to Beautiful*

My Favorite 20th Century Music

In February, Professor Derek Katz plans to examine the ways the selected individual pieces function, to discuss the historical reasons for their stylistic characteristics and to suggest ways of not only understanding them but also of caring for them. A preliminary list of works is: Igor Stravinsky, *Octet for Winds* (1922-23); Alban Berg, *Violin Concerto, "To the Memory of an Angel"* (1935); Bela Bartok, *String Quartet No. 5* (1934), and others.

Maritime History of Baja California

In pursuit of his interest in the history of Baja California and the relationship between the United States and Mexico, Ed Vernon has just published a new book on the subject and is prepared to share the wealth of his vast research during a three-session class in May 2010. Previously, Ed led extremely popular classes on the Missions of Baja California and the Mexican War.

Coming Up: A Look at Health Care Around the World. An introductory meeting on March 4, Flyer to follow.

For more detailed information on these seminars, both past and future, go to the website under Past Events and Upcoming events: vistaslifelonglearning.org.

MEETINGS

Are you curious about the inner workings of the VISTAS Board of Directors and/or the Executive Committee? All members are welcome to attend our meetings. The Board meets every three months and the Executive Committee meets every other month or so. The next Board meeting will be in April. Email VISTAS@silcom.com or phone 687-6030 for date and time and let us know you want to attend.

Meeting of Minds

Ray Stone

Another episode of the *Meeting of Minds* series will be presented May 12, featuring Theodore Roosevelt, Queen Cleopatra, Father Thomas Aquinas, and Thomas Paine; this was the very first episode presented by Steve Allen. VISTAS members who would like to try out for these roles, and for Steve Allen himself, should notify Ray Stone either by email at rstone@west.net or by phone at 682-2123 by February 15. Auditions will be held in March and the cast selected soon thereafter.



Cast of Meeting of Minds in September, 2009: Charles Darwin played by Phil Wilcox, Attila the Hun, played by Ray Stone, Galileo, played by Dwight Coffin. Emily Dickinson played by Jan O'Dowd, and Barbara Walters (aka Steve Allen), played by Sue Mellor,

VISTAS Winter 2010 Calendar

Seminar/Event	Inclusive Dates	Time	Venue
Documentary (ongoing)	Third Thurs every month	2:00pm	Maravilla Theater
VISTAS Winter Social	Sun, Jan 31	2:00pm	Music Academy of the West
Early 20th Century Music Derek Katz	Tues, Feb 23, Mar 2 & 9	1:30-4:30pm	Valle Verde Auditorium
Education Challenges Bob Macy	Wed, Feb. 3 10, 24, & Feb 18 (only morning)	1:30-4:30pm 9:30am-12:30pm	Presbyterian Church
It's About Time David Bisno	Mon, Mar 15, 22, 29 & Apr 5	TBA	Presbyterian Church
Meeting of Minds	Wed, May 12	9:30am-12:30pm	Valle Verde Social Room
Maritime History of Baja	May (tba)		

MEMBERSHIP FORM

- Yes, I/we want to join VISTAS Lifelong Learning, Inc. \$40 Individual
Additional contributions in any amount are welcome \$60 Household (two people at the same address)

Name(s): _____

Street: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Telephone: _____ Fax: _____ Email: _____

Please make your check payable to: VISTAS Lifelong Learning, Inc.

Mail to: VISTAS Lifelong Learning, Inc., P.O. Box 23228, Santa Barbara, CA 93121-3228

Please circle items you do not want on membership list: name address phone email