

Newsletter
Winter 2012

VISTAS VIEWPOINT

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VISTAS OFFICERS 2011-12

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NEWSLETTER

Virginia Cochran ,
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Marti Mangan,
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Dear VISTAS Members and Friends,

With the holidays behind us, VISTAS is ready to usher in a new Spring lineup of classes, several of which already began in January. It will be hard to match the scope and variety of our Fall offerings but Barbara Krahn and her hard working Curriculum Committee members (John Calandro, Ben Kehela, Jan O'Dowd, Charlie Schneider, Diane Wolf, Lois Kaplan, and Peter Kruse) are not the kind to rest on their laurels. Be sure to contact her or any of the members if you are interested in presenting a class of your own or have a knowledgeable contact.

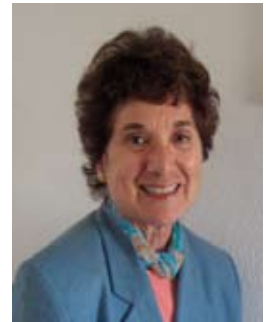
There have been some Board changes this year with the welcome addition of Shirley Diamond and Ted Anagnoson. Wayne Hoffman has taken a temporary leave but hopefully will recuperate fully and return soon. We will miss the lively presence of Jeri Eigner and the sage guidance of George Frakes who have both resigned from the Board. You all know George from his numerous and informative presentations. He also was one of the original founders of VISTAS and has lent his guidance to the board ever since, while also serving as past chairman of the Curriculum Committee and a hard working member. Hopefully he won't be going far and we will see him regularly at our seminars.

The use of Valle Verde as our major venue will be in jeopardy after April when its scheduled construction begins. Charlie, Ben and John have been canvassing the community for alternative locations and I'm glad to say that good prospects are in the offing.

Be sure to sign up for the Winter Social on Sunday, January 29th, and bring friends for a highly entertaining afternoon. Ray Stone has once again put together a gala production of short plays with an array of VISTAS actors. We'll be back at the newly renovated Music Academy with our customary gourmet spread.



Bon Appetite! Members and guests will have another opportunity to enjoy the delectable food created by *Catering Connection* when they provide the refreshments for our winter social on January 29. Those who attended the fall picnic were rewarded with succulent entrees of salmon and chicken breast, an interesting array of grilled vegetables and salads, wine and forget-the-calories brownies and cookies. Membership chair Diane Wolf promises that we'll remember the array of mouth watering hors d'oeuvres planned by *Catering Connection* for our social. We return to the Music Academy of the West for this year's event that begins at 2 p.m. Advance reservations at \$25 each are preferred; the price at the door is \$35.



MEMBERSHIP PICNIC

VISTAS President Sue Mellor welcomed some 82 members and guests at Manning Park on the second Sunday in September for the annual picnic that serves the dual purpose of satiating our appetite for good food and congenial company while simultaneously whetting our other appetite for the smorgasbord of intellectual delights planned for 2011-12. Members had a chance to reconnect following the summer hiatus as they enjoyed wine and hors d'oeuvres followed by a delicious buffet featuring poached salmon, chicken, grilled vegetables a variety of salads, and capped by sinfully rich brownies provided by Catering Connections. Hats off to Membership Chair Diane Wolf and her hospitality committee for a great job.

Equaling the richness of this repast was the depth and breadth of offerings scheduled by the Curriculum Committee, chaired by Barbara Krahn. Ray Stone, Pete Kruse, Fred Sidon, Diane Wolf and Jan O'Dowd were among those previewing the coming season, that runs the spectrum from perspectives on Italy and Africa to music, theater, the justice system, political parties, pirates, health, documentary film and more.

BUILDING AND PLAYING THE HUBERT SCHWYZER INSTRUMENTS

What a treat for music and art lovers to first learn about the craft of violin making and then hear the results of that effort as performed on the quartet of instruments created by master craftsman James (Jim) Wimmer. Jim's engaging personality shone as he described himself as a "fiddle" player who, while touring in Germany transitioned from being a "fiddler" to becoming a fiddle maker. There, under the tutelage of a mater instrument maker, Wimmer embarked on a multi-year apprenticeship similar to those employed by the guilds of another age. Wimmer lived and worked in his mentor's studio where he learned to create string instruments using the materials, methods and tools barely changed since the 16th century. Using these techniques, he created the quartet of Hubert Schwyzer Instruments commissioned by Westmont College in 2007 and completed in 2009. Jim's listeners learned that string instruments are made of two kinds of wood, poplar for the back and sides and spruce for the front. Equally as important as the wood used is the glue that holds the pieces together. It must be flexible enough to allow the wood to expand and contract with temperature changes without breaking apart at the seams. Wimmer said he obtains all his materials in Europe and remarked that the wood for the Hubert Schwyzer Instruments came from the same tree. Following Jim's presentation Professor Philip Ficsor of Westmont College introduced a quartet of his students who performed a short classical program before inviting the audience to examine the Hubert Schwyzer Instruments more closely.



ITALY—150 YEARS OLD (1861-2011)

Fred Sidon had our heads reeling as he led us through the twists and turns of kingdoms and rulers that have swapped and divided the terra firma of the Italian Peninsula since 1796. Starting with the "Italy" just prior to Napoleon with a variety of Kingdoms, a Grand Duchy, Papal States and republics, Fred carried us through the period where Napoleon's grandiose ambitions ruled through his family and friends. Fred then chronicled the struggles following Napoleon's downfall, and the rise of colorful and courageous Italian nationalists. With knowledgeable flair, Fred intertwined traditional Italian taste and culture into his dialogue, including tantalizing Italian sweets to share with us all. Thank you Fred!



FINDING WISDOM IN THE OLD TESTAMENT/HEBREW BIBLE

Professor Tremper Longman (Westmont College) over two sessions explored the message and meaning of four lesser known books of the Old Testament/Hebrew Bible: Proverbs, Job, Ecclesiastes and Song of Songs. In Proverbs there are answers to everyday situations; e.g., friendship/neighbors, justice, wealth and poverty, authority etc. Job addresses the issue of undeserved suffering. Ecclesiastes struggles with the meaning of life and the importance of timing. Song of Songs contains erotic love poetry. We hope to hear more from Professor Longman in the future.

DOCUMENTARY FILM CLUB

Topical issues, art-related subjects, and seminar-specific films all comprise the resources made available through the club's monthly screenings. This season the club's chair, Diane Wolf, has assembled a variety of films that illustrate this diversity. Offerings have ranged from *Gasland*, a hard hitting look at the effects on several US communities of fracking, the controversial process that uses chemically enhanced and highly pressurized water to extract natural gas from deeply embedded shale rock formations, to *Hollywood, An Empire of Their Own*, which traces the establishment of studio industry by Jewish emigrants who, after fleeing the pogroms of Europe and the unfriendly east coast establishment, became a vital force in the growing movie industry. *Ashes in Snow*, an art piece featuring interaction between animals and humans, and video clips of performances by and conversations with the late, celebrated pianist Horowitz put the focus on the arts. In January a film on Africa, its people and the effect of outside influence on the continent, will complement the current seminar on Africa. In addition to the films, the program includes post-screening discussions, often enhanced by a guest related to the documentary. The film club meets at 2 pm at the Maravilla Theater on the third Thursday of each month September through June.

BUILDING AN OPERA

La Bohème, favorite of opera lovers worldwide, was the catalyst for a fascinating afternoon presentation titled *Building An Opera – La Bohème*. On hand to provide an insider's look into the world of opera and the role Santa Barbara Opera plays in our local arts life was the company's Executive Director Steven Sharpe. He opened our eyes to the effort and resources needed to mount a production worthy of Santa Barbara's discriminating audiences, pointing out that the work begins months in advance of the performances, when the company selects the opera, talented young performers and stage and music directors.

Efforts then turn to locating and transporting sets, renting appropriate period attire for the production and obtaining housing (offered by local opera lovers) for singers in town for rehearsals and performances. Months of planning and juggling logistics are the foundation on which musical coaching and rehearsals are then built to create the finished product Granada audiences enjoy.

To complete the afternoon, Bob Weinman, who provided us insights into *Wagner's Ring Cycle* in 2010, turned his musical knowledge and archival ingenuity to Puccini to provide a selection of excerpts from a variety of *La Bohème* productions, ranging from performances by such revered stars of the past as Renata Tebaldi and Jussi Bjerling to recent stagings featuring current luminaries, among them Anna Netrebko and Rolando Villazon. Coming up next *The Marriage of Figaro*.

THEATRE IN THE MAKING: A WORLD PREMIERE

During January, February and March, UCSB Drama Professor and Director RISA BRAININ gives VISTAS members an inside look at Lila Rose Kaplan's new play *ENTANGLED*, a play about twins, physics and personal hygiene.

Play synopsis: The new fall term is starting at Twins Academy, a boarding high school for exceptional twins. The school's dance instructor, Leigh, is not happy to learn that her longestranged twin sister, August, (both played by Ms. Torsiglieri) is returning to teach physics at the academy they founded together 25 years ago. August's eccentric lessons on entanglement (a term used in quantum theory) gradually pull their students into the family rift. Oh, and everyone stops showering. In a school setting both unusual and familiar, *Entangled* examines the highs and lows of breaking apart and coming back together again.

Combine multiple enrollments on one check. Instead of writing multiple checks you may list the various enrollments covered on the memo portion of your check. There is no need to complete all the enrollment forms if your check lists the courses you are paying for.

VISTAS WINTER SOCIAL

The Winter Social on January 29 will feature Act II, six one-act plays performed by the VISTAS Repertory Acting Troupe. Following last year's example, this group of fourteen actors and actresses, all VISTAS members, will perform another set of plays selected for their depiction of unusual and entertaining situations. This year's event will be held in Lotte Lehmann Hall, at the Music Academy of the West on Sunday, January 29, from 2-5pm. The usual gourmet spread will be served following the entertainment.

Diane Wolf chairs this event and Ray Stone produced the plays.

SHORT STORIES REDUX

Last spring Gene Waller led a highly successful small discussion seminar on Short Stories, and he has agreed to repeat the format. In February he will conduct three in-depth discussions of the following well-known stories: *The Death of Ivan Ilych* by Leo Tolstoy, *Bartleby the Scrivener* by Herman Melville, *The Open Boat* by Stephen Crane, *Boule de Suif (Butter Ball)* by Guy de Maupassant, *Bliss* by Katharine Mansfield, and *Hills Like Elephants* by Ernest Hemingway. This will be an active participation class with everyone reading all of the stories, sharing in leading the discussions, reading selected passages aloud, and exploring literary techniques of this genre. The class is limited to 16 to allow for maximum interaction.

DAVID BISNO RETURNS!

David Bisno will be participating in VISTAS again this Spring. David will present two topics in our Harvard Justice seminar which resumes on March 7, and continues each Wednesday morning until April 25. David will be taking on the issues of Affirmative Action and Same Sex Marriage in the context of Michael Sandel's course on *Justice: What Is the Right Thing to Do?*

In addition, David will offer a one-day class discussing two important questions coming before the Supreme Court this Spring. One is the California challenge to Same Sex Marriage which was voted down with Proposition Eight. Does Prop 8 violate the Equal Protection clause of the Federal Constitution? The second question concerns the validity of the individual mandate in Obama's Affordable Health Care Act.

David will help us sort out the layers of meaning surrounding these two issues coming before the Court and our Nation. Join the Harvard Justice class this spring and explore with the class ways to think about important moral issues.

Course cost reminder. If you can attend only one class of a multi-class course, the fee is \$15. However, if you miss one or more of the classes you must pay for the full course.

E-mail. To reduce mailing costs, we've asked members with e-mail to receive our flyers and newsletters through that method. If you have opted for e-mail delivery, but are not receiving information regularly, we may have the wrong address, or you may not have given us one, or advised us of a change. Please contact VISTAS@silcom.com to correct, or add your address to the list.

Badges. Contact VISAS@silcom.com if you in need of a badge.

Current information. Between mailings you can keep up with our latest moves by checking the VISTAS website: vistaslifelonglearning.org.

Seminar/Event	Spring 2012	Presented by
For more detailed information on these seminars, both past and future, go to the Website under Past Events and Upcoming Events: vistaslifelonglearning.org .		
Documentary Club	Third Thursdays	Diane Wolf
Why Democracy? Why Capitalism? Why the West?	Mon Feb 6	Paul Warwick
Health Care Ethics	Mon, Feb 27	Dennis Murphy, M.D.
Marriage of Figaro	Mon, Mar 5	Bob Weinman
The Justice Course II	Wed, Mar 7, 14, 21, 28, April 4, 11, 18, 25	Barbara Krahn
The Balcony Empire (Italy)	Mon, Mar 12, 19, 26	Nick DiNapoli
Supreme Court Issues	Mon, Apr 16	David Bisno
Documentary Film	Thurs, Apr 19	Diane Wolf

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 If you have already paid dues for the 2011-2012 year, do not send this in.  
**VISTAS LIFELONG LEARNING MEMBERSHIP FORM**

- Yes, I/we want to join VISTAS Lifelong Learning, Inc.     \$40 Individual  
*Additional contributions in any amount are welcome*                       \$60 Household (2 people at the same address)

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