

# THE INSTITUTE FOR HISTORICAL STUDY

VOLUME 27, NO.4, SPRING 2007

# NEWSLETTER

---

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jules Becker  
Monica Clyde  
Richard Herr  
Ellen Huppert  
Joanne Lafler  
Peter Mellini  
Margaretta Mitchell  
Edith Piness  
Patricia Swensen

NEWSLETTER EDITOR Lorrie O'Dell  
ASSISTANT EDITOR Joanne Lafler  
BOOK REVIEW EDITOR Autumn Stanley

Mailing Address:  
P. O. Box 5743  
Berkeley, CA 94705

[www.tihs.org](http://www.tihs.org)

THE INSTITUTE is affiliated with the National Coalition of Independent Scholars (NCIS), the American Historical Association (AHA), and the National Coalition for History (NCH).

---

The NEWSLETTER is sent to all Institute members, as well as college and university libraries and other interested scholars. The Institute appreciates all tax-deductible contributions made by non-members who wish to remain on its mailing list.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

At our annual meeting on February 24, we elected members of the Board of Directors for two-year terms from 2007 to 2009. New to the Board are **Richard Herr** and **Patricia Swenson**; second two-year terms were secured by **Jules Becker, Monica Clyde** and **Joanne Lafler**. Congratulations to all and thank you for your willingness to help keep the Institute going.

Thanks also to **Judith Strong Albert** and **Anne Homan**, leaving the Board after serving for two two-year terms. They were warned that they may be asked to return at a future date!

Thanks also to the Nominating Committee, chaired by **Lorrie O'Dell** and consisting of **Jules Becker, Ann Harlow, Nancy Zinn**, and myself. The Nominating Committee for next year was also elected at the meeting.

While the members of the Institute elect the members of the Board, the Board elects its own officers. That will occur at the Board's next meeting on April 7.

As for future events, the next all-member gathering will be a visit to the Judah L. Magnes Museum in Berkeley at 11 am on Sunday, April 29. Lunch, of course, will follow. A detailed announcement will be sent in early April. The Institute's special interest groups will also be meeting according to their own schedules.

A sad note: **Frances Richardson Keller's** husband, **William Rhetta**, died in December. He was a familiar and cheerful presence at Institute events from the beginning of the organization, as Frances was a member of the first Board of Directors. We extend our condolences to Frances.

*Ellen Huppert*

The Institute also extends its grateful thanks to **Ellen** for serving as Board President for the past two years with energy, efficiency and charm. She, too, may be asked to return at a future date.

## WORK-IN-PROGRESS – Celeste MacLeod

---

### *Mutliethnic Australia: Its History and Future*

**Celeste MacLeod** loves Australia. She has spent considerable time there, and eventually her knowledge of Australia led to research on immigration to this interesting continent and nation, culminating in her book, *Multiethnic Australia* (McFarland, 2006). On January 14, Celeste spoke about her research to members and friends of the Institute at the home of **Edith Piness**. Her talk focused on immigration to Australia from 1947 to 1995, but she also touched upon the recent decade of immigration about which more historical research is needed. After two centuries of varying immigration policies, Australia in 1947 had a population of only 7.5 million people, not enough for its industrial and military needs. Today, Australia's population stands at 20 million. How did this growth come about?

Immediately after World War II, a massive immigration program attracted settlers from Eastern and Southern Europe as well as Russia and expanded gradually to include many other nations. Australia rarely took in Asians then; it wanted to preserve its British-oriented cultural values. But after conservative Prime Minister Robert Menzies (1950-1966) stepped down, Australia gradually began admitting a carefully selected group of "distinguished" Asians, such as highly-skilled workers and professionals with their families. In time, it also began accepting people from countries in the Middle East, South America and Africa.

What was expected of these multiethnic immigrants was complete assimilation to the dominant British/Western cultural values in order to become fully Australian. This policy began to change in 1973 after the Labor Party, which had campaigned to stop immigrant selection on "any ground of race or colour of skin or nationality," was elected. The new government established a wealth of services for migrants to help them adjust and get a "fair go" at establishing themselves and their families in Australia. The new tolerance of multiethnic groups, was reflected in the official "Galbally Report" (1978) that stated that "every person should be able to maintain his or her culture without prejudice or

disadvantage and should be encouraged to understand and embrace other cultures." As a result of this policy, Australia now has "perhaps the most comprehensive system of migrant and multicultural services in the world" as noted in a report evaluating the scope and effectiveness of its immigration policy.

And yet! While multiculturalism was encouraged on the one side, there were voices against it. The decade from 1995-2005 revealed that after all the years of effort and commitment to absorb a multiethnic population of immigrants, Australians are yet somewhat divided on multiculturalism; some applaud it, others want to restrict it in order to preserve the country's British/Western cultural roots. In 1996, John Howard, a staunch believer in assimilation, became prime minister. In the new conservative climate, critical voices popped up that said Asians were overwhelming the country and were forming ghettos and that Aboriginals got special privileges that no other group received.

In recent years, two major events have impacted Australia's policies vis-à-vis migrants from other countries. First, the rise of China and a few other important trading countries in the region has brought about a great economic boom for Australia. Second, the troubles in the Middle East have affected Australia. In 2001, after boats filled with refugees from Afghanistan and Iraq increased, the prime minister refused to let another boat dock on Australian soil and began diverting refugees into offshore camps. Then came the Bali bombing in 2002, where, out of the 202 killed, 88 were Australians. Yet, some seem to recognize that Australia's location makes it an ideal bridge between two cultures—Southeast Asia and the West, primarily Britain, on whom Australia has modeled itself throughout its history. Bridging these cultures successfully holds much potential for Australia's future. It is a challenge whose final outcome remains to be seen.

*Monica Clyde*

### CALIFORNIA ROUND TABLE

The California Round Table group met on Saturday, January 20, at the home of **Ellen Huppert**. The topic was "Issues in Writing California History." **Joanne Lafler** touched off the discussion by explaining that she's preparing a talk for the Harrison Memorial Library in Carmel about bohemian life in Carmel in the early twentieth century. She wants to call the talk "What's Wrong with this Picture?" because there are so many myths about the period which she would like to deflate. Life in Carmel, like so much of California history, has been romanticized for its natural beauty and, what seems to outsiders, easy living. But the writers who lived in Carmel between 1905 and 1915 were very hard working, making a living rather than just enjoying parties. Another myth, coming along with the vision of an Eden, was the equivalent of the Fall of Man, a high suicide rate. It was simply not true that many of the Carmel bohemians killed themselves there. **Jules Becker** raised the issue of the comparison of California with the rest of the country, especially in regard to politics. The group discussed some of the implications of such comparisons. **Edith Piness** explained that her work with the San Francisco Museum and Historical Society involved planning for the new museum. How should it create the San Francisco story? Much thought and controversy has gone into what to include and what to emphasize. One of the issues is: What makes San Francisco unique? The group on Saturday suggested its multicultural, multiethnic, tolerant nature and the fact that so many arrived together after 1848 and therefore began as equals. **Maria Sakovich** suggested that San Francisco and California history, like every other history, has relied on master narratives which must be reexamined every generation. The next meeting of the California History Round Table will be Saturday, April. The topic is undecided, but if Maria is available, she will talk about her work on Katherine Maurer, Methodist Deaconess at Angel Island. If Maria is unable to make her presentation, Edith will report further on the plans for the San Francisco history museum.

*Ellen Huppert*

### HISTORY-PLAY READERS

In the last issue of the Newsletter I reported that the Play Reading Group had just read a short play by Alexander Pushkin entitled *Mozart and Salieri*. The play, written in 1831, was inspired by rumors that Salieri had poisoned Mozart. The group then turned to Peter Shaffer's *Amadeus*, which opened to acclaim at the National Theatre in London in 1979 and made its American debut in 1980, winning a number of Tony awards. The play explores the rivalry between Mozart and the Austrian Court Composer Salieri, who, overcome with jealousy at hearing the "voice of God" coming from an "obscene child," sets out to destroy his young rival. Salieri becomes obsessed with conspiring against Mozart and plots and schemes for his demise, eventually killing him. Shaffer became interested in the relationship between the two composers after learning about Mozart's mysterious death, stating that the conflict between virtuous mediocrity and feckless genius took hold of his imagination. He contends that his work was never intended as a documentary biography of Mozart, but rather that he wrote it as a story and not a history.

There was a dramatic change of time, place and subject matter as the group turned to Gore Vidal's *An Evening with Richard Nixon*. Vidal wrote the play in 1972 and it ran briefly and unsuccessfully on Broadway. It was his last new play to be performed there, made memorable by a young actress who played several parts—Susan Sarandon. Gore Vidal was born into a family with high political and social connections. The body of his writing is large and diverse. He has written for stage and screen and is an accomplished novelist and essayist. He also flirted briefly with politics. According to Vidal, the Nixon character in his play spoke only Nixon's actual recorded words. The History-Play Readers began the play at the end of their last meeting and will continue the reading at their next meeting. All interested persons are welcome to join us in reading history plays.

*Edith Piness*

## GROUP REPORTS

---

### BIOGRAPHY WRITERS

The Biography Group met on Sunday, January 28, at **Autumn Stanley's** aerie in Los Trancos Woods. Getting there was an adventure for **Joanne Lafler**, who had a flat tire on the way, but bought two new tires, and continued her journey into the hills. Only three members made it to Autumn's—**Ellen Huppert**, **Bonda Lewis**, and Joanne.

Autumn, who has recently completed a full first draft of *More Hell and Fewer Dahlias*, her biography of Charlotte Smith and has sent it to Indiana University Press, presented the latest-written piece of the book, the Introduction, for feedback on how well it pulls readers in. The group had good suggestions, particularly on things that needed explaining. Ellen presented her most recent, and last, chapter using Barton Taylor's writings, in this case his book, *Helps to a Correct Understanding of Nature According to Realism*. The group confirmed her fears that even her condensation of his work left readers baffled and frustrated. Fortunately, she has found two articles which he published, in which he covers some of the same material in a much more readable way. That will allow her to include even less of the book in her final draft.

Since Joanne is preparing a lecture she'll be giving in Carmel at the end of March about the Carmel bohemians who were friends of Harry Lafler's, she decided to write the last few pages of a much earlier chapter. These pages describe the founding of the Carmel colony in 1905, with Lafler's poet-friend, George Sterling, as the central figure and Mary Austin as an early resident. Although Lafler was never a Carmel resident, he was a frequent visitor over the years. Since a good deal has been written about the Carmel group, Joanne's goal is to provide enough, but not too much, background information and correct some factual errors. Bonda brought some pages from her novel for the group to read but discussion of them will have to wait until the next meeting.

*Ellen Huppert*

### READERS OF MEDIEVAL HISTORY

In early December, **Lyn Reese** welcomed the Readers of Medieval History to her home for a presentation and discussion of *Travels with a Medieval Queen*, by Mary Taylor Simeti. Semeti, an American living in Sicily, chronicled a twelfth century journey of Constance, a Sicilian Norman princess and the sole heir of her father, Roger II. Constance was married to Henry, the son of the German Emperor Frederick I (Barbarossa), and in order to assure that her child was born within the confines of the Kingdom of Sicily, she traveled from the northern German lands into Italy where she gave birth to Frederick II in Jesu, Italy, thus assuring that the crown of Sicily was gathered up for her husband Henry. Simeti, in researching this story, traveled the same route that Constance took, pointing out the difficulties she would have had to endure compared to a relatively easy twentieth century automotive experience.

In January, at the home of **Nancy Zinn**, **Joanne Lafler** accepted the group's invitation to talk about medieval English "Mystery Plays." Joanne prefers to call them "Cycle Plays," since they were a series of short plays written in the vernacular and performed by townspeople. Four complete texts of the cycles exist from York, Chester, Towneley, and N Town, with copies of single plays surviving from various other towns. Each complete cycle consisted of from 25 to 48 individual plays, some only 100 lines long. Most episodes were drawn from the Bible, especially the New Testament, although the stories of Noah and of Abraham and Isaac were popular. Plays were sponsored by guilds and performed by male guild members once a year, associated with a particular religious holiday. Using pageant wagons, a procession moved through the town, stopping at specific sites to perform. In York, all 48 plays were performed on one day, the feast of *Corpus Christi*. We ended the session by reading aloud the play of Noah from the York cycle. Joanne's presentation was received with great pleasure and many thanks.

*Lorrie O'Dell*

## MEMBERSHIP NEWS

---

**Margaretta Mitchell** reports that her traveling photography show, *The Face of Poetry*, is being exhibited from January 26 through May 15 at the University of Southern California Doheny Memorial Library, 3550 Trousdale Parkway, University Park Campus, in Los Angeles.

**Lyn Reese** has taken on a series of projects which use primary sources to link women's contemporary human rights issues to history. One is an article which will appear in a special women's history issue of the online journal *World History Connected* (an internet outreach effort by the World History Association). The article is entitled "Women, the Family and Human Rights: Using Primary Sources to Link Past to Present," and all of the sources she mentions in the article can be accessed on the web. In March, she will be using this theme in a workshop she is presenting in Bled, Slovenia for the EUROCLIO conference of middle and secondary European educators. The theme of the six-day conference is "'Teaching Human Rights Through History.'"

**Steven Levi** has had four books accepted since the last newsletter, most of them already available: *Midnight*, (Adventure Books of Seattle, 2006). *Bait*, (Chippewa Publishing, 2006). *Tell It All: Memories of a Con Man, by Alabama Fats as told to Steven C. Levi* (Community Press, 2007). *Cadzow* (Lachesis Publishing, 2007). Another publication, a history of the Alaska Gold Rush, will be out in the fall from Greenwood Publishing.

**Joanne Lafler** has been invited to give a lecture in Carmel on March 26, under the aegis of the Henry Meade Williams Local History Department of the Harrison Memorial Library. The lecture, titled "What's Wrong With This Picture?," deals with the myths and realities of the bohemian community in Carmel in the early decades of the twentieth century. One such myth involves Harry Lafler, who never lived in Carmel but often included among the "colorful Carmelites."

### NEW MEMBERS

**Amy Essington**, who lives in Southern California, is a graduate student in American History at Claremont Graduate University, working on a dissertation on the integration of the Pacific Coast Baseball League. She is also the Executive Director of the Western Association of Women Historians, and, in preparation for a history of that organization, has recently been visiting the Bay Area to interview members of the Institute who have been active over the years in the Association.

**Charles Fracchia** is the Dean of City College's Library and Learning Resources. He taught for many years at the Fromm Institute for Lifelong Learning at the University of San Francisco. He was a long-time trustee of the California Historical Society. He founded the San Francisco Historical Society, which merged several years ago with the Museum of the City of San Francisco and is now called the San Francisco Museum and Historical Society. This is the group which is planning to open a Museum of San Francisco in the Old Federal Mint Building. Over the course of several decades, Charles led lively historical walks of San Francisco. He is invited regularly by many groups in the city to speak about San Francisco history.

### WORK-IN-PROGRESS MEETINGS

One of the benefits of membership in the Institute has been the opportunity for members to present their scholarly work to a small and supportive audience for helpful suggestions and critiques. Members who have in the past presented article drafts, book chapters, and even comments on work completed have commented on how helpful they found the comments and the support of the audience at their presentations. We encourage you to consider talking to other Institute members about your work. If you would like to make such a presentation, please contact **Lorrie O'Dell**, (510) 451-8682 or [lorrie@galleyslaves.com](mailto:lorrie@galleyslaves.com).

## ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING – Morning Session

---

At the home of **Georgia Wright** in Berkeley, at 10 am on the morning of February 24, Board President **Ellen Huppert** called the annual membership meeting of the Institute for Historical Study to order. After all those present were welcomed, the reports to the membership began.

According to Treasurer **Joanne Lafler**, the Institute is in very good financial condition, with total assets of \$27,594 as of February 15 of this year. The endowment fund contained \$13,527 (as of December 2006) and \$14,068 remained in the operating account. A full financial report will be sent to members at the end of the Institute's fiscal year, March 31. In the absence of **Monica Clyde**, the report on Works-in-Progress sessions was presented by **Lorrie O'Dell**, who stressed the value of such meetings to the members and urged any member wanting to take advantage of this opportunity to contact her. Membership Chair **Edith Piness** announced that the membership now totaled 101 with the recent admission of **Amy Essington** and **Charles Fracchia**.

Reports were then presented on the various study groups. Joanne Lafler reported that the Readers of History Plays had read plays about various historical figures—Anthony and Cleopatra, Mozart, Darwin—as well as both reading a play by August Wilson and attending a production of one of his other plays. They are now in the middle of a play by Gore Vidal about Richard Nixon. Speaking for the California Round Table, **Jules Becker** described the group's members as those interested in various aspects of California History; they meet quarterly and the format usually consists of one member presenting a particular aspect of their work. Ellen Huppert reported that membership in the Biography Writers Group had diminished since three members had finished their projects: **Jeanne McDonnell** has had her book on Juana Briones accepted for publication, **Ethel Herr** and **Autumn Stanley** are waiting for word about their submissions. In the absence of **John Rusk**, Lorrie O'Dell described the various presentations by the Readers of Medieval History: medieval travel by **Nancy Zinn**, the medieval warm period and the little ice age by Lorrie O'Dell, the Scottish wars of independence by

John Rusk, medieval manuscripts by **Perri Hale**, the Italian maritime republics by **Lyn Reese**, and the Domesday Book by Lorrie and **Bob O'Dell**.

Ellen then reported on the two public programs sponsored in 2006 by the Institute: in April, a program at the San Francisco Public Library on the San Francisco Earthquake and Fire featured **Malcolm Barker** and Joanne Lafler; in May, a Saturday morning field trip to the Maritime Library at Fort Mason. Our next public event will be an April 29<sup>th</sup> tour of the Judah L. Magnes Museum in Berkeley.

Lorrie O'Dell, as both Newsletter editor and keeper of the e-mail list, discussed the various aspects of these duties. She wants to gather more news about the membership, especially those activities that are unique to most historical study. She reminded members that access to the e-mail list makes possible the sharing not only of Institute news, but of ideas and items of interest. She also paid tribute to the work of John Rusk, the Institute's webmaster, who not only keeps [www.tihs.org](http://www.tihs.org) up to date, but is also looking for ways to expand its reach.

Next on the agenda was the election of new members for the Board of Directors; Jules Becker, Monica Clyde, **Richard Herr**, Joanne Lafler, and **Patricia Swensen** were elected to two-year terms. The following members were elected to the 2008 Nominating Committee: Jules Becker, **Anne Homan**, Edee Piness, Lyn Reese, and John Rusk. Gift certificates were presented to Anne Homan and **Judith Strong Albert** with "Thanks" for their service on the Board for the past four years.

The morning session closed with a discussion of various issues, particularly suggestions for other Institute programs or activities. One suggestion was to revive the mini-courses which were held in former years. Another was to have book discussion sessions, particularly around a particular theme. It was suggested that members could recommend books via the Newsletter or by e-mail. It was agreed that the Board would consider all these suggestions. The meeting then broke for lunch.

## Afternoon Session – ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

---

After lunch and collegial conversation, **Malcolm Barker** and **Jules Becker**, presented "San Francisco and the World in 1907," a program designed to discuss what the city was like after the 'big shake' of 1906, as well as what life was like around the world at that time.

Malcolm talked about how, after finishing the research for his book about the 1906 earthquake, his "thoughts were of heroic San Franciscans jumping in there and rebuilding their city to show the world they could do it." However, after looking at newspapers for 1907, he came to realize that they still had many problems to content with. Walking from the Ferry Building up Market Street to Van Ness meant having to avoid holes, greasy mud, fallen and falling walls, and nervous horses. City Hall was still a pile of rubble nine months after the event, the drainage system was inadequate, and sidewalks still cluttered with debris.

Although office buildings were being built with speed, crime was rampant in the city; hotel guests were warned not to venture out at night. Mayor Eugene Schmitz had been indicted for graft and was awaiting trial, and the ineffective Chief of Police Jeremiah Dinan was about to retire from office facing a charge of perjury. The Supervisors "were too worried about being indicted themselves to be concerned with their municipal duties." The city's population, about 500,000 in April 1906, had dropped right after the big quake, but in April 1907 it was up to 435,000, just 65,000 short of the previous year. It was the cities of Oakland, Alameda, and Berkeley that had grown.

San Francisco had always been a union town and in 1907, strikers were particularly active. At one point the streetcar workers, laundry workers, and ironworkers as well as "all of the telephone girls" were out on strike. The violent streetcar workers' strike brought threats to bring in the Army. In the fall, a new mayor, Edward Taylor, a new Board of Supervisors and improved relations with the unions, gave San Francisco a "new and revitalized turn."

The focus of Jules' part of the presentation began with a survey of the 'quality of life' in the United

States around 1907: the average life expectancy was 47 years of age; only 14 percent of homes had a bathtub; eight percent had a telephone; there were only 144 miles of paved roads for 8000 automobiles; the average wage was 22 cents an hour; sugar cost four cents a pound, eggs were 14 cents a dozen, coffee was 15 cents a pound; and most women only washed their hair about once a month. The five leading causes of death were pneumonia and influenza, tuberculosis, diarrhea, heart disease and stroke; the population of Las Vegas, Nevada, was 30; only 230 murders were reported across the country; and two out of every 10 adults couldn't read or write. There were fewer than 1700 blacks in San Francisco in 1907, many having left for the East Bay. Although Chinese had been excluded as emigrants in 1904, San Francisco had the largest population of Chinese in the United States. The Japanese population in the City was the second largest in the US, after Seattle. Due to growing tensions with Japan, President Theodore Roosevelt convinced Mayor Schmidt and the Board of Education to allow Japanese children to attend school along with American children. "TR" also negotiated a "Gentlemen's Agreement" with Japan not to allow Japanese laborers to emigrate to the U.S.; Japanese were finally excluded in 1924.

Other happenings of note during 1907: Berkeley made a bid to become the state capitol and announced plans to annex Oakland; political king-maker Abe Ruef pled guilty to the charge of extortion (of all the politicians charged during the 1906-07 scandals, Ruef was the only one to go to jail); the Olympic Club held its first motor meet at Tanforan race track; Harry Houdini visited the city, escaping police cuffs and underwater chains; in September, the Cliff House burned to the ground; the plan to move Chinatown to Hunter's Point was stopped after adamant opposition by the Chinese.

The presentations were followed by comments and questions, and finally with applause. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 2:30 pm, with thanks to Georgia for her hospitality.

*Lorrie O'Dell*

# CALENDAR

---

March 11      Work-in-Progress -- Tom Snyder  
April 14      California History Round Table  
April 29      Tour of Judah L. Magnes Museum  
May 20      Work-in-Progress -- Hildi Kang

Members are encouraged to let us know all their news – a paper being given at a conference; a new job or position; the awarding of a grant or fellowship. Please send all material for the NEWSLETTER either by e-mail to [lorrie@galleyslaves.com](mailto:lorrie@galleyslaves.com) or to the Institute's postal address given below. Also, we welcome the opportunity to review members' newly published books. Contact **Autumn Stanley** at [autumn2\\_dave@compuserve.com](mailto:autumn2_dave@compuserve.com). The deadline for the next NEWSLETTER is **May 31, 2007**.

---

The NEWSLETTER is the official publication of the Institute for Historical Study, a scholarly organization designed to promote the research, writing, and public discussion of history. Membership in the Institute is open to independent and academically affiliated scholars who are in agreement with its aims and who have a commitment to historical study. Membership inquiries should be sent to the Institute address.

The Institute for Historical Study  
P. O. Box 5743  
Berkeley, CA 94705  
[www.tihs.org](http://www.tihs.org)