

THE INSTITUTE FOR HISTORICAL STUDY

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NEWSLETTER

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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

The annual meeting, held February 23, 2013, at the Golden Gate Branch of the Oakland Public Library, was well-attended. The highlight was the presentation of a gift of \$10,000 from the estate of Frank Brechka. Frank, a longtime member of the Institute, was also a long-time friend of Wayne and Mary Walker, who came to present the gift and to talk about Frank. We are deeply grateful for this substantial donation, a testament to one member's faith in the organization. The board and the members will be discussing how best to make use of the Frank Brechka Memorial Fund. Three history presentations by members (summarized on pages 2-3), all most interesting, completed the program.

During the morning's business meeting, elections were held for members of the board and of the nominating committee. There are now eight members of the board, a number allowed under a recent amendment to the bylaws, which set the minimum number of board members at seven. I want to acknowledge the work of **Cornelia Levine**, the only retiring board member. Among various other roles, she served as treasurer for two years. Thank you, Cornelia. Right after the election, the board met and elected officers: I was chosen president, **Jackie Pels** vice-president, **Richard Robbins** secretary, and **Georgia Wright** treasurer.

Special events are being planned: the California Roundtable is organizing another field trip similar to the day last fall in Glen Ellen at Jack London's ranch (see page 9). In October, a public program at the Main Library in San Francisco will feature local archives. We want to attract students, teachers, and independent scholars to learn of the riches held in many of the smaller nearby archives.

Ellen Huppert

ANNUAL MEETING

Presentation of Gift

Beginning the afternoon's program was a special presentation of a gift from long-term member Frank Brechka, who died this past August. Wayne Walker, a long-time friend of Frank's, and his wife, Mary, came from Atlanta, Georgia to present a check for \$10,000 to the Institute. Wayne noted that Frank valued the work of the Institute and attached no strings to his gift. Wayne described the 50-year friendship that began in their days as graduate students at UC Berkeley, when the older and more experienced Frank took the very young and green Wayne under his wing. Over the years "Uncle Frank" (as the Walker children knew him) became a close friend of the family. Wayne shared the recent pleasure of reading Frank's travel diaries and the discovery that he also had a gift for illustration. (Frank loved travel, often going by freighter to allow himself ample thinking and writing time.) At the end of Wayne's lovely tribute, which included many biographical details (see page 10) and the observation that Frank was a "collector par excellence," Nancy Zinn noted that she got to know Frank at meetings of U.C. librarians and recalled that he used British mystery writer Josephine Tey's *Daughter of Time* as a teaching tool for his history students.

Three history presentations (summarized below by the speakers with Judith Offer) completed the program.

Dot Brovarney: "Heroes, History, and Hagiography: Jack London and Alan Chadwick"

Dot Brovarney is working on an oral history project to document the role of master gardener Alan Chadwick (1909-1980) in the development of the contemporary organic gardening movement. During the recent Institute trip to Glen Ellen, she discovered that Jack London

and Alan Chadwick shared similar beliefs about natural vs. industrial gardening practices: following ancient farming traditions, including eschewing pesticides and growing the soil to support the plant. Both men possessed an artistic temperament and charisma, leading them to inspire many and, at the same time, resulting in difficult relationships.

Born into wealth in 1909, Chadwick learned gardening growing up on his family's English estate. As a young man apprenticing in France, he learned about French intensive techniques, including double digging and cover crop planting. After a career in the British National Theatre, he returned to gardening. His reputation as a teacher and public advocate for the organic approach began in the 1960s at U.C. Santa Cruz where he was invited to create a garden with the assistance of student apprentices. Never integrated into the school proper, nonetheless, he developed a following, becoming sort of a Pied Piper to a number of students. It is these students and others from subsequent Chadwick garden projects in Saratoga and Covelo, and at Green Gulch, whom Dot Brovarney is interviewing. Alan Chadwick's many apprentices, inspired by their teacher, have continued his legacy into the 21st century by creating their own organic gardens and farms, essentially forming the spirit and substance of the contemporary organic movement. (See www.talkingchadwick.org for more information about The Alan Chadwick Legacy Project.)

Jackie Pels: "More Than Meets the Page: Alaskans at Fort Ross, 1812-1841"

Commissioned to write the official poem for a celebration in 2012 of the 200th anniversary of the founding of Fort Ross, Jackie Pels decided the narrative would be in the voice of one of the Alaska Natives who accompanied the Russians

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to the Sonoma coast. With images from a variety of sources, she detailed weeks of research, aided by a minigrant from the Institute, to find names and persons rather than the anonymous hunters usually mentioned. What she eventually found delighted and moved her—and radically changed her notion of the poem. Titled “Only the Beginning,” it is dedicated to the children of Bodega Bay and sister city Tot’ma, Russia and was read at an international gathering in Bodega Bay, staging ground for construction of the settlement. It appears in the Fort Ross bicentennial publication, and, to her bemusement, a signed copy was auctioned for \$100 at a fundraiser for the Rancho Bodega Historical Society.

Maria Sakovich: “The Chapel at Settlement Ross: A Remarkable Social History.”

Fort Ross (better known as Settlement Ross during the Russian era) was one of the earliest historical sites to be preserved in California by the nascent preservation movement at the turn of the 20th century. Although several original structures existed at this time, over the course of the years, the chapel has taken on a symbolic role that belies its humble origins. With 44 images, Maria Sakovich presented the story of how the Russian Orthodox chapel endured neglect, use as barn and stable, earthquake, and fire to triumph as symbol and shrine. The structure, no longer original, seems far more important today than it ever was during the Russian occupation. Not only is it instantly recognizable as “Russian” and representing an exotic episode in California history, it was also claimed by refugees from the Bolshevik revolution as a symbol of a lost homeland and new life in California. For Russian Orthodox Christians the chapel and nearby cemetery have become a place of pilgrimage.

WORKS-IN-PROGRESS

A testimonial to the value of a long-time Institute practice is provided by member **Sharan Newman** whose work-in-progress took place in February at the home of **Georgia Wright**.

“Work Very Much in Progress”

Last autumn, I sold a book to Palgrave/MacMillan about Melisende, who was the third crusader ruler of Jerusalem. In February, when I presented my work in progress, I had done weeks of research and still hadn’t written the first word. The focus of the book had been changed by the editor, and I couldn’t get it started.

Melisende (ca. 1105-1161) was the half-Armenian daughter of Baldwin II, the second king of Jerusalem. He had come from Northern France and had married the daughter of a minor lord near the city of Edessa. As a female ruler, Melisende had some problems, particularly with a pushy husband. But her worst problem has been that historians pretended she barely existed. This was true of the many other women who controlled lands in the Near East at that time. I wanted to tell their stories, too. But this desire spread to a discussion of all the other voiceless people of the time: peasants, slaves, foot soldiers, monks, nuns and many others. It was getting out of hand.

I put my quandary to the group of members who came to hear me. This provoked what I found to be a very useful discussion. There were some who already knew something about the topic, but most didn’t. They helped me understand how much background I needed to put in and which points might be of most interest to general readers. There were also some good

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suggestions about organizing the information in a coherent manner. As a result, I took this input back with me and reviewed the disparate sources. After many false starts, I was able to write the first chapter. I decided to focus on Melisende's life and give the story of life around her by location. In that way I could begin with her birth in Edessa, telling about the social and political situation at the beginning of the Crusades. I'll follow her to Jerusalem, the establishment of the kingdom as a part of the culture, the disastrous interruption of the Second Crusade and the change of the balance of power. The book will emphasize the nonmilitary aspects of this history, as much as possible.

I sent the chapter to my editor and she is very enthusiastic. The title at the moment is "Defending the City of God: A Medieval Queen, the First Crusades, and the Quest for Peace in the Holy Land." That may change. But I wouldn't have had this much done if it weren't for the discussion with Institute members who took the trouble to come and listen to my floundering. As independent scholars that peer assessment during the process of creating a project is invaluable. No one is too experienced not to benefit from this. Thanks to all who gave me insight into my work. I shall be happy to present the finished product when it appears in early 2014.

— Sharan Newman

"Speculation in U.S. Lands: St. Joseph County, Michigan as a Case Study"

Doing research for her book *In Their Own Words*, Ellen Huppert, her husband, Peter, and her sister, Fran, set out across the country to dig in archives and visit towns where her relatives had lived. Like so many by-ways that lure us, the trip led to a topic peripheral to the main narrative of her book. She wanted to discover whether "speculation" was a correct description

of land acquisition in the nineteenth century, as most historians of federal land policy have maintained. Until the Homestead Act of 1862 offered free land, federal lands were sold at modest prices.

Did people buy large tracts hoping to sell them off for a profit? Did large landholders in the northwest wield political power as they did in the Chesapeake Bay area, where tenant farmers were the norm?

From the beginning, U.S. land policy had conflicting goals, personified by two founding fathers. Alexander Hamilton wanted land sales to pay the federal debts such as those owed the French from the American Revolution. Thomas Jefferson wanted the development of many small farms that would be the basis of a democracy. Originally, the price for federal land was set at \$2 an acre and the minimum parcel at 160 acres or a quarter section. Over time the price went down \$1.25 per acre in 80 acre parcels, which finally dropped to 40 acres.

The Northwest Ordinance of 1785 established the rectangular survey system. U.S.-held lands were platted into ranges and townships. In turn, each township was divided into sections of one square mile. The system simplified land descriptions, and it made possible the work of Gregory Boyd, who mapped the original federal land sales in many U.S. counties, including St. Joseph County, Michigan, where Ellen's ancestors became landowners beginning in 1837.

Boyd's book provides maps of each township in St. Joseph County and valuable indexes by surname. Ellen looked for the name Calvin Bronson, the uncle of her great grandmother Lizzie Gurney Taylor. He had purchased 33 parcels in the county. Curious to know if Bronson was the largest landowner in the county, she searched land records for him and others in the County Courthouse, in tax records,

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in U.S. and Michigan censuses, and on-line in the records of the Bureau of Land Management General Land Office (BLM-GLO). Bronson's name was all over the map, literally, as he had purchased scattered pieces throughout St. Joseph County, amounting to 2,860 acres, making him one of the largest landholders in the county. Bronson's acreage was more than ten percent of the total 23,040 acres in the county.

Yet he and the six other largest land purchasers owned less than 50% of the total acreage in the county. The great majority of purchasers had taken 80-160 acres.

How could Bronson have afforded his large purchases, Ellen asked. She found a clue in what he did with them. He sold many tracts to his relatives, but he gave 720 acres, which he had bought for \$1,080, to his brother, suggesting that his brother had financed some of the purchases. By 1843, Bronson had sold at least 2,280 of the initial 2,860 acres he had bought.

The rush to purchase land in St. Joseph County and elsewhere in Michigan began in 1835 and ended with the Panic of 1837. Bronson must have suffered from the bust, because he declared bankruptcy. Nonetheless, he managed to hold on to significant tracts of land. His investment paid off in 1853, when he sold more than 677 acres to the Fort Wayne & Chicago Railroad Company for a total of \$5424.56, land for which he had paid \$843. This handsome profit no doubt helped fund the tobacco business which he established in Toledo, Ohio, where he became a very wealthy member of that community.

Ellen found it impossible to prove or disprove land speculation in St. Joseph County. If speculation is defined as someone purchasing more land than he expected to farm himself, almost everyone was a speculator. If the definition is based on other considerations, such as quick profits made or political influence,

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detailed research is required to answer the question. Until some historian with lots of student labor takes up the project, historians of U.S. land sales may generalize about it at will. However, the research into landholding in Lizzie's home county did confirm her sense that western Michigan in the 1850s and 1860s was a pretty egalitarian place.

– *Georgia Wright and Ellen Huppert*

Writers Group

Following our new format, the January and February Writers Group meetings focused on one member's work at length.

In January, the group met at the home of Carol Sicherman and discussed Joanne Lafler's Chapter 5, "Love Letters," and Chapter 6, "Earthquake," from her biography of Henry Anderson Lafler. We were all impressed with Joanne's work, which presented Lafler as a complex man, as a lover, and as a professional writer. The group's consensus was that the biography was ready for publication, and we encouraged Joanne to proceed to send a proposal to a possible publisher now.

In February, at the home of Ellen Huppert, we reviewed Elizabeth Nakahara's Chapter 5 on the French photojournalist Patrick Chauvel. Part of her book on contemporary photojournalists placed in historical context, this chapter presents a fascinating character while also explaining her own efforts to learn about her subject. The group was enthusiastic about her subject, while making some suggestions for improvement in the chapter.

Louis Trager, a new Institute member, joined the group in January. For the February meeting he offered an introduction to his work on the American internationalists who substantially

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shaped foreign policy from the 1930s through the 1950s. The sense of the group was that Louis needed to provide much more explanation of the individuals and groups he presented so that ordinary readers could appreciate what he was explaining.

All members of the Institute are invited to join the group, which meets the second Sunday of each month.

— Ellen Huppert

History-Play Readers

In my last write-up for the Newsletter, I explained that the play reading group was halfway through Dava Sobel's *And the Sun Stood Still*, the play which is at the center of her book *A More Perfect Heaven*. She recounts how Nicolaus Copernicus was persuaded to publish his ideas about the solar system, including the radical concept of the Earth's motions around the Sun with Earth losing its place as the center of the universe.

Copernicus, who was a canon of the Polish Catholic Church, receives a surprise visit from Rheticus, a young German mathematician from Nuremberg who has heard of his work and travels over 500 km. to see him. Rheticus was a Lutheran, and Lutherans had been banished in Copernicus' Poland. Filled with tension and fear of betrayal their meeting and subsequent interaction were not easy. But Rheticus' persistence and support finally convince Copernicus to complete and publish his theories of a heliocentric solar system.

The play readers traveled back even more centuries to read *Cinna, or the Clemency of Augustus*, the story of a conspiracy against Augustus in 4 CE, written by Pierre Corneille in the 17th century. Although set in Rome, the themes also characterize the royal power of

Corneille's France. After Augustus had executed the father of young Emilia, she convinces Cinna to help her avenge her father by murdering Augustus. In return, she will marry him. Cinna, along with his friend Maximus, plot to kill the emperor. However, Maximus is also in love with Emilia and is overcome with jealousy when he learns that she is the reason for Cinna's planning to kill Augustus. Maximus' servant Euphorbus suggests that he betray Cinna in order to win Emilia. Euphorbus, acting on his own, goes to Augustus to reveal the plot. The Emperor's wife, Livia, urges him to pardon Cinna and thus gain glory and respect for himself. The conspirators argue among themselves, each claiming to be the responsible party. Resolution comes when Maximus declares that he and his servant made up the story and Augustus decides to follow Livia's advice and, despite his knowledge of their perfidy, pardons them all.

The history-play readers will meet again early in April. Anyone interested in attending, please contact Joanne Lafler.

— Edith Piness

Medieval Studies Group

Last September, **Bob O'Dell** spoke to the group about medieval slavery, focusing on south-western Europe. Bob started his presentation by reminding his audience that all societies throughout history have had slaves and that it was only in the late eighteenth century that England initiated efforts to eliminate it. Slaves were literally owned by their masters: they could own nothing, couldn't marry, and had no power over their children. Their condition was sanctioned by church teachings that every man should stay in the condition into which he had been born. Up through the eighth century, abbots, bishops, as well as the papacy, used

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slaves. Conversion to Christianity did not provide slaves with any help from the church, but Christian doctrine and the universality of the sacraments may have helped them to an understanding of their own equality before God.

The main supply of slaves was from the birth of slaves to slaves. But poverty, debt, or famine would often lead freemen to sell either their wife or their children into slavery. War allowed the victors to treat their captives as slaves either for their own use or to be sold. As property slaves had value: murder of another man's slave required reparations such as three female slaves for one male slave; harm or injury to a slave could be punished by mutilation, castration, or a beating. By the eleventh century, slavery was dying out in the area under consideration. The economy was improving, technical progress, such as water mills and horse collars, meant less need for human labor. Slowly feudalism as a form of labor organization began to take hold.

Bob's talk was based mainly on the material in *From Slavery to Feudalism in South-Western Europe* by Pierre Bonnassie (1991); see also: *Enemies and Familiars—Slavery and Mastery in Fifteenth Century Valencia* by Debra Blumenthal (2009) and *A Large-Scale Slave Society of the Middle Ages—Slaves and their Families in Early Medieval Bavaria* by Carl L. Hammer (2002).

Later in September, **John Rusk** spoke to the group about the end of the Hundred Years' War between England and France. His presentation was based in large part on *Conquest: The English Kingdom of France, 1417-1450* by Judith Barker (2012). The war, begun with Edward III's invasion of France in 1346, ended in 1450 with the final English retreat from the Continent. It is difficult for us who live in the present day to understand the Hundred Years' War. English and French royal families had

intermarried so much that it took expert genealogists to sort out lineages. The English Henry V was convinced that he was also by birth King of France. After victory at Agincourt and further campaigns, the French conceded that Henry become heir to the sometimes-mad King Charles VI. But might doesn't make right any more than right makes might. As years passed and tides of war ebbed and flowed, it became more and more apparent that the French were never going to accept English dominion. The charismatic Joan of Arc provided one piece of evidence for that fact. It took more years and many more deaths, but finally the English were pushed out of the continent. With so many deaths and so much destruction over more than the one hundred years in its name, the Hundred Years' War was a fiasco for both sides.

At the November meeting, **Lyn Reese** described the unusual March 1324 charge of witchcraft brought by Richard de Ledrede, Bishop of Ossory, Kilkenny County, Ireland, against Dame Alice Kyteler. Dame Alice was accused of heresy based on her alleged practice of sorcery and devil-worship, charges which ultimately led to the confiscation of her extensive properties, her fleeing to England for refuge, the public burning of her maid servant Petronilla, the whipping and banishment from the city of ten others accused of sorcery, and the excommunication and imprisonment of Sir Arnold le Poer, the Kilkenny seneschal and the dame's primary defender. Of key importance to historians is that the origins of the witch hunts of the 16th and 17th centuries can be traced to charges laid in this trial. The charges reveal the deliberate introduction of demonic association into trials for heresy. The consideration that witchcraft was a form of heresy coincided with the elevation to the papacy of John XXII who issued several bulls giving inquisitors authority to use the belief in magical forces in their arsenal of charges. Pope John believed himself

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to be surrounded by enemies who were forever using sorcery in attempts on his life; he even believed in the possibility that the devil might be enclosed in a ring!

Lyn discussed the various personalities and soap-opera events surrounding de Ledrede's protracted efforts to bring Dame Alice to justice as well as the attention the case received in Ireland. The Bishop, an outsider of English origin, at one point was accused of heresy himself and was briefly imprisoned. Dame Kyteler, a high status woman of considerable wealth whose Anglo-Norman family had lived in Ireland for generations, had extensive connections with the local power elite. Even though she may in fact have presented herself as a high priestess who led pagan rites, such practices occurred within traditional Celtic pre-Christian celebrations aligned with the changing seasons and were largely tolerated. Thomas Wright of the London Camden Society was the first to bring Dame Kyteler's trial record to light in 1843. Although Lyn's interest was first piqued by Robin Morgan's account of Dame Kyteler in her novel *The Burning Time*, a far better general source for this subject is *Witch Craft in the Middle Ages* by Jeffrey Burton Russell.

Ellen Huppert reported to the group in December on the struggle against the papal Inquisition in 14th-century France, based on Alan Friedlander, *The Hammer of the Inquisitors: Brother Bernard Delicieux and the Struggle Against the Inquisition in Fourteenth-Century France* and two books by Stephen O'Shea, *The Friar of Carcassonne: Revolt Against the Inquisition in the Last Days of the Cathars* and *The Perfect Heresy: The Revolutionary Life and Death of the Medieval Cathars*.

Brother Bernard Delicieux (ca. 1250-ca. 1320), a Franciscan friar based in Carcassonne, led an

uprising in southwest France against the Inquisition, which had been established to convert or destroy heretics under the leadership of the Dominican order. A military effort against the Cathars, the Albigensian Crusade, had ended in 1229, and the aristocratic leadership of Languedoc had lost power to the Kings of France. There remained, however, many adherents of the Cathar sect in the region, and the Inquisition used its brutal methods against heretics and orthodox believers alike.

Opposition to the Inquisition was only one of the struggles affecting France at the end of the thirteenth century. The French monarchy was resisting papal authority in the kingdom at the same time that it was forcing its power over the previously autonomous territory of Languedoc. Brother Bernard was effective in exploiting those tensions. What ensued was a series of power struggles over what on the surface seemed to be religious questions.

The result of all this turmoil was the humiliation of the papacy by France when the popes moved to Avignon. But the Inquisition won its battle. In Carcassonne, the Inquisitor entered the Franciscan convent and removed the remains of seven people who had been condemned 30 years earlier. Their corpses were publicly burned as a sign of the unrelenting furor of the war against heresy.

This past February, **Nancy Zinn** talked about the Jews in medieval Europe, based in large part on *Abraham's Heirs: Jews and Christians in Medieval Europe* by Leonard B. Glick (1999) and *A Historical Atlas of the Jewish People, from the Time of the Patriarchs to the Present*, Eli Barnavi, ed. (1992). The European Diaspora began in the 6th century on the Iberian Peninsula, and continued north into the German lands into the 13th century. Major Jewish communities were found in Troyes, Worms and

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Mainz. Known as Ashkenazi Jews, many spoke Yiddish. In places such as England and France, as well as in many German states, they were tolerated and protected by the rulers because they were a source of wealth. Although Christians were forbidden to lend money due to the sin of usury, governments and even individuals had no problem borrowing from Jewish lenders. Yet, throughout the centuries, the Jews, perceived as different and as "Christ-killers" by the Christian majority, were the constant victims of persecution. The worst periods occurred around the 11th and 12th centuries at the time of the Crusades. Riots led to the burning of synagogues and the murder of men, women, and children. There were calls for the forced conversion of the Jews on pain of death, the confiscation of their monies as a form of tax, and eventually expulsion. In 1290, the Jews were expelled from England; in 1306, they were expelled from France.

— Lorrie O'Dell

Institute Excursion – Printing History: An Afternoon in Vallejo

Institute members and their guests will have the opportunity to visit the McCune Collection at the John F. Kennedy Library in Vallejo on Saturday afternoon, April 13, 1:30-4 p.m. The program will include an introduction to the McCune collection of rare books and fine printing, a talk by our member Peter Meyerhof, "José de la Rosa and California's First Printing Press," and a talk by a puppeteer who is developing a puppet show related to the Kelmscott Chaucer in the collection. See www.mccunecollection.org; contact Ann Harlow to RSVP.

MEMBER NEWS

In Memoriam: Frank Tilson Brechka

Frank Brechka died this past August at age 80, after living for years with Parkinson's disease. Frank Brechka was the only child of Margery Connell Brechka and Frank A. Brechka. Born on September 30, 1930, on Staten Island, New York, Frank was educated on the east coast, attending Columbia College in New York City, where he received an A.B. degree in the liberal arts and a Master of Science in Library Service and a Master of Arts in History, both from Columbia University.

He spent the early years of his career as a librarian in New York where he worked at the New York Public Library, at Staten Island Community College, and as reference librarian at Wagner College.

In 1963 Frank entered the doctoral program in history at U.C. Berkeley and received his Ph.D. in 1968. Frank's specialty was early modern European history with specialties in the history of the Netherlands, the history of books and libraries, and intellectual history. He spent the remainder of his career at U.C. Berkeley where he served as a reference librarian in the Doe Library and as the history librarian from 1971 until his retirement in 1991.

Frank wrote *Gerard van Swieten and His World, 1700-1772*, as well as numerous articles and reviews in professional journals, travel articles, and poetry. Frank had very eclectic interests that were represented in his collection of more than 2,000 books. He was always a learner; in his retirement he spent three summers conducting research at Oxford University. Frank received several honors, including a scholarship at Columbia University in the School of Library Service, a Fulbright Scholarship to study in the Netherlands and Austria, and a research grant from the Librarians Association of the University of California.

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Throughout his life, Frank was a man of the sea, booking many trips on freighters to circle the globe. During his travels, he remained an avid collector of cultural artifacts. He was the envy of all of his friends when he survived an attack in 2007 by Somali pirates while on a cruise, a travel story that was difficult to top.

Frank is remembered most, however, for his gentle manner and for being the nicest guy you can imagine.

— Wayne Walker

Compared to What? a play about Pullman sleeping car porters by **Judith Offer**, can be seen May 10-25, Fridays and Saturdays at 8 p.m., Sundays at 4, at the First Christian Church (Fellowship Hall), 29th and Fairmount in Oakland. Tickets will be \$15 and \$20 at Brown Paper Tickets.

Annual Meeting Minutes (slightly abbreviated)

On February 23, 2013 the annual meeting was called to order at 10:30 by president Richard Robbins. The minutes of the annual meeting of 2012 were presented and approved. The treasurer's report was presented by Ann Harlow and approved. The membership report included the information that we gained 9 new members in the past year. Three members have died. Membership for the year 2012 has been about 88.

Bonnie Portnoy, chair of the website task force, reported that it is seeking a professional designer to aid in the design, while the content is being shaped by members of the task force. Reports were also made on the many programs and group activities which occurred over the

—continued on page 11

BOOK REVIEW

Church and State in the City: Catholics and Politics in Twentieth-Century San Francisco by William Issel, Temple University Press (2012).

William Issel's latest book, *Church and State in the City*, provides an important missing chapter in the telling of the history of San Francisco. In this scholarly work, Issel chronicles the major role the local Roman Catholic Church has played in shaping and influencing San Francisco politics, covering a period of time from the early 1890s to the end of the 1970s and populating his heavily documented narrative with a colorful cast of both familiar and forgotten characters.

Issel, Professor Emeritus of history at San Francisco State University and author of several books, has dug deep into a rich treasure trove of primary sources—from academic papers, periodicals, newsletters, flyers, hearings transcripts and government reports to papal encyclicals, archdiocese archives, personal letters, and interviews—to stitch together this carefully executed summation that is, in his words, “an analytical narrative . . . that demonstrates the central role of Catholicism, in complex relations with capitalism and with other social and institutional interests, in shaping the city's public life.”

His book presents two arguments: (1) beginning in the early 1890s, the city's politics were “directly influenced by the deliberate attempts of the Catholic Church” and its members to shape “the terms of debate about the common good” and to formulate public policy to reflect the tenets of Catholicism, and (2) the Church and its members found themselves pitted against laissez-faire capitalists, secular liberals, and anti-Catholic socialists and communists. Issel's book counters present-day conventional wisdom that San Francisco has always been a bastion of free spirits, socialists, bohemians, radicals, and secular humanists by presenting a great deal of

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evidence that the city we know today is rooted in more conventional and constructive interplays of cooperative, bipartisan consensus-building among the city's religious, business, political, and labor groups throughout the 20th century.

Organized generally in chronological order, *Church and State in the City* begins in the 1890s with a look at the roots of San Francisco's 20th-century political and social structures, as the various forces—politicians, union organizers, business leaders, and clergy, exclusively the domain of white males—swirled around each other, setting the city on a course it would follow for many decades, one of interconnectedness and vigorous debate. Readers will learn of the critical roles played at the time by, among others, banker and politician James Duval Phelan, activist clergyman Father Peter C. Yorke, businessman Frederick J. Koster, Archbishop Patrick Riordan, and Pope Leo XIII's encyclical, *Rerum Novarum* (On Capital and Labor).

In subsequent chapters, many of the city's milestone events and periods are viewed in the context of the interactions among and influences upon each other of the Catholic Church, the reigning politicians, the unions, and the business community: the labor strife of the 1930s, the Depression and Roosevelt's New Deal, fears of fascism and communism, the changing city after World War II, racial discrimination in the 1950s, the civil rights activism of the 1960s, the growing liberalism of the 1970s. Issel describes many of the key moments and these times in detail, giving them a "you-are-there" flavor. He brings back to life the people who *were* there, relating little-known anecdotes and facts about the principal players in this sweeping story.

In sum, William Issel's *Church and State in the City*, is a "must"—both for its content and its wealth of references—for any historians whose research is focused on San Francisco. It will

make many readers rethink what they thought they knew about the evolution of the city politic and what place religion has played in San Francisco's social, economic and cultural evolution.

— Rose Marie Cleese

Annual meeting minutes, continued:

year. President Robbins noted that three members had received mini-grants: Dot Brovarney, Jim Shere, and Carol Sicherman.

Edith Piness, on behalf of the Nominating Committee, led the election of the board of directors and the next nominating committee. (See page 1.) Jules Becker, Kathy O'Connor, Judith Offer, Edith Piness, and Lyn Reese were elected to the Nominating Committee. The meeting was adjourned at 11:30.

— Ellen Huppert

CALENDAR

March 17: Play-in-progress - Jody Offer

April 6: Board meeting

April 13: California Roundtable excursion: McCune Collection at John F. Kennedy Library, Vallejo

April 21: Work-in-progress - Cathy Robbins

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 msakovich@juno.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 autumn_stanley@sbcglobal.net. The deadline for the next NEWSLETTER is **May 31, 2013**.

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