

THE INSTITUTE FOR HISTORICAL STUDY

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NEWSLETTER

The Making of a Geek by Cathy Robbins

I should have known that at some point in my life I would become a geek.

Perhaps living in the orbit of Silicon Valley has done this to me. No humanist can be averse to science, just as scientists cannot neglect history and the arts. Einstein, a dedicated amateur violinist, said the theory of relativity occurred to him by intuition: “Music was the driving force behind that intuition. My discovery was the result of musical perception.”

My adult interest in science started when “Star Trek” was a failed television series. I repeatedly watched episodes as Captain Kirk piloted the starship Enterprise to new worlds and into forbidden themes, like cultural dislocation and race relations. I was just off the starship Columbia, where I had fulfilled my science requirement with a course in astronomy for nonastronomers, which was designed to soften the science blow to delicate undergraduate brows. When the series returned with Jean-Luc Picard, the aloof historian and archaeologist, I became a determined Trekkie. I bought a Starfleet pin and wore it on trips even though I guessed people would think I was crazy, until a flight attendant told me she had one too but couldn’t wear it at work.

Many people in the space program got started by watching “Star Trek,” including Charlie Bolden, the current administrator of NASA. His scientists are exploring warp drive, and he likes the Federation of Planets (a cosmic UN), which his agency is working toward. Astrophysicist Neil De Grasse Tyson, a tireless science advocate and environmental activist, and I share a devotion to Trek. Stephen Hawking thrillingly appeared as himself in one episode where Commander Data played poker with holograms of Newton, Einstein, and Hawking. (Data is the Enterprise’s android who tries to become human by acting in Shakespeare and Sherlock Holmes stories and playing poker and the violin.)

Over the 35 years we lived in New Mexico, I developed an interest in the history of the atom bomb at Los Alamos. Los Alamos and Sandia National Laboratories (based in Albuquerque) started to shift some funding from weapons development to energy research, and while the budgets still tipped toward weapons, a quiet struggle continued among scientists about righting the balance. Several books had covered figures like Oppenheimer, Teller, and Bethe. During the furor over Three Mile Island, for a story on nuclear energy, I interviewed Norris Bradbury, Oppenheimer’s successor. (The solar-heated library at Los Alamos is named for him.) A quiet scholarly man, Bradbury told me that the nuclear reactor in a plant is safe, but outmoded “plumbing” is dangerous. When I was working on a *New York Times* story about the 50th anniversary of Los Alamos, I realized that no one had told the stories of many people who had worked there during the war years and were dying—not just the scientists but also the lower-level people who were mechanics, janitors, cooks—and the wives. Some critics have suggested that “Manhattan,” the WGN television series about the bomb project, is unrealistic. Although it takes dramatic liberties, it captures the culture, science, and mood. It also reveals the lives of the mostly invisible women at wartime Los Alamos.

When we moved to the Bay Area, the science bug bit again. My breakthrough experience was a course in the Fromm program at the University of San Francisco. Delirious with anticipation, I signed up for a class

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Best wishes for a satisfying and productive 2016!

I will be brief.

The Institute's Annual Meeting is fast approaching! Mark the date—Saturday, February 27, at the North Berkeley Public Library, 10:30 to 4. You will be getting a formal notice soon with all the details, directions, etc. I encourage you to come!

The business meeting will take place between 10:30 and 12. You will hear a brief update on the state of the Institute, get reports on the work of our subgroups, and have the chance to vote for some new board members. We will also talk about possible new directions and programs. After lunch—a sumptuous repast (but brown-baggers welcome)—you will learn the results of our hotly contested elections. Most important of all, we will hear from some of our new members about their current history-related activities.

Annual Meetings are wonderful events, opportunities to catch up with old friends and make new connections. They are especially important now, since general gatherings of our members have become infrequent, and most of our activities take place in smaller groups. But while we are a “mature” organization, we continue to attract new members. (The latest surfaced at the recent *Moby Dick* Marathon in San Francisco.) The Annual Meeting is a chance to make them welcome and to hear what they have in mind for their future in the Institute.

2015 has been a very good year. We want 2016 to be even better. Come to the Annual Meeting and help us set our course.

Rob Robbins

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WORK IN PROGRESS

“Jenny Again: Bringing Her Home and Loosing Her on the World”

Over the years, Institute members have had the pleasure of attending Bonda’s Lewis’s “Performances Off the Shelf,” in which she speaks in the person of a significant historical figure. The ones I particularly remember are Jane Austen, Louisa May Alcott, Amelia Bloomer, and Sara Bard Field. They are works of historical scholarship, based on extensive research in primary sources and study of the social and material culture of a given period. In these performances, no detail, including costume, is trivial. She learned from experience the extent to which wearing a corset affected a woman’s posture and breath control and limited her movements. At the home of Ellen Huppert on November 15, Bonda noted that after doing research comes the crucial process of inhabiting a character imaginatively.

She has now turned to historical fiction with a series of three novels, aimed at young adult readers, which tell the story of “Orphan Train children” in the Mid-West in the early 20th century. As with her historical performances, first she was drawn to the subject; then came the research; finally there was the inhabiting.

Through her research on Louisa May Alcott, Bonda first learned of the plight of street children in New York City, whose cause Alcott had taken up after visiting the Duane Street lodging house for homeless newsboys, run by the Children’s Aid Society. Photographs of New York slums in the 1880s, including the homeless boys known as “street Arabs,” provided powerful images that Bonda would later transfer into words. She then learned that the Children’s Aid Society had hit upon a radical solution: transferring homeless children from the streets of New York to rural America, where they would be placed in the homes of farmers and storekeepers, perform unpaid labor to pay for their keep, attend school, and experience family life. Between 1853, when the orphan train

program began to operate, and 1932, when it ceased, over 120,000 children were transported to 45 states around the country. The New-York Historical Society houses a vast collection of records of the Children’s Aid Society, including diaries and memoirs of the children and a collection of photographs. One photograph struck Bonda especially: a girl who had been placed with a family in South Dakota. The fictional Jenny Markov was born.

Drawing upon her memories of family visits over the years, Bonda has set Jenny’s story in rural Nebraska. Jenny is a feisty thirteen-year old when she and her ten-year-old brother, Will, arrive in Beaver City in 1912. Through Jenny’s thoughts, feelings, friendships, and experiences during four years in Nebraska, readers experience the history of the orphan train movement. And much more, in addition.

From Institute member Jeanne McDonnell, Bonda first learned about suffrage leader Sara Bard Field and her famous cross-country automobile trip from San Francisco to Washington, DC in 1915, carrying to Woodrow Wilson a woman suffrage petition with thousands of signatures—200,000 already when she left San Francisco. The journey, which took Field and her two women companions through Nebraska and Kansas, is well-documented. The second book of Bonda’s series focuses on Jenny as a high school student, culminating in her involvement in the local suffrage movement. She and her friend Maud, a local farmer’s child, collect signatures and are thrilled to be invited to travel to the Kansas town of Marysville, where Field makes a stop of several days. Bonda read an extensive passage about that experience, which is notable for the widening of Jenny’s world (she and Maud stay in the magnificent Marysville home of wealthy supporters of the suffrage movement, the Leopolds) and the excitement of her meeting

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with Sara Bard Field. As Bonda read, we understood that she had truly inhabited her fictional creation.

In the discussion that followed, people wanted to know how much more there will be to Jenny's story. Bonda is presently working on the third and last volume, which will take Jenny far away from Nebraska, beginning with suffrage work in Washington, DC. Ellen Huppert, who had recently seen the movie "Suffragette," made the point that the word "suffragette," an invention of the press, was despised by suffragists themselves. We never hear it in Jenny's story. Maria Sakovich remarked upon the skill with which Bonda has woven together historical detail and fiction. Cornelia Levine wondered whether it was common, in the early decades of the twentieth century, for Jews like the fictional Leopolds to be a dominant presence in a small town. Bonda noted that it was not uncommon, and that she had gotten valuable historical statistics from a website called 300 Million Americans: <http://www.infoplease.com/spot/300-million-americans.html>. (I've checked and bookmarked this amazing resource.)

Needless to say, we are all eager to hear more of Jenny's story.

– *Joanne Lafler*

Writers' Group

At its November 8th meeting, six members discussed **Cathy Robbins'** book-in-progress, "A Torrid Splendor: Finding Calabria," which recounts her ancestry in Italy, Calabria's epic socio-political history, and the region's current, less-than-epic state of affairs. Southern Italy is demographically multi-ethnic, culturally bountiful, economically boom-to-bust, and migrationally ever-changing. So can an author chronicle this complexity by being memoirist, journalist, and historian?

"It's not a travel book," according to Cathy. Instead, the book uses family saga to tell the dramatic story of culturally rich Calabria sliding downward into gradual decay and abandonment. Robbins wants to show readers that Calabria is still "vibrantly alive in its people, its food, its language, and its social and political relationships." "Italy," she says, "is enjoying a "Renaissance": half the people who emigrated are now returning and locals are reviving once endangered dialects.

Members agreed that the author's prodigious historical research overshadows the family saga as well as the contemporary description of Calabria. One member suggested adding a time line and a map or two to show migration patterns and demographic influences on art and architecture. Other members proposed having a clear narrative thread that interweaves familial, contemporary and historical material. And members also advised condensing the first two chapters into one to streamline and focus the overpowering historical material.

– *Elizabeth Nakahara*

At its January 10 meeting, the group met at the home of Carol Sicherman to discuss the last chapter of **Rob Robbins'** epic biography of Vladimir Dzhunkovskii (1865-1938). The chapter, which concerns the painful and tragic final period of Dzhunkovskii's life, presented the same difficulties as previous ones—a strong narrative drive and superb writing made it hard for the group to come up with complaints. Several members found an opportunity for Rob to abridge a section. There was considerable discussion of the complexities of conveying the cultural and political context for a non-specialist audience. When one participant asked whether this was in fact the last chapter, and others chimed in, Rob confessed that he had given much thought to an epilogue reflecting on Dzhunkovskii's significance during his lifetime

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and since, especially the post-Soviet period, when the publication of his memoirs brought him to public attention. The meeting ended with Rob's rendition of Soviet jokes, a reminder that stand-up comics and historians aren't mutually exclusive. All attendees agreed to publicize Rob's recommendation of Yakov Smirnov, a stand-up comic who emigrated from the USSR.

– *Carol Sicherman*

Medieval Studies

In October 2015, **John Rusk** reported on Nicholas A. Robins' *Mercury, Mining, and Empire: The Human and Ecological Cost of Colonial Silver Mining in the Andes*. A case can be made that the most important city in the Spanish Empire of the 16th through 18th century was not Madrid nor Toledo nor Mexico City, but Potosi, the source of seventy percent of the silver and, thus, the wealth of the empire. That city, plus the mercury mining center of Huancavelica, was also the site of an ecological and human disaster that continues to this day. The immediate cost to the *indios* was stupendous: families and villages torn apart and destruction of an age-old social structure, all sanctioned by a philosophy that saw the natives, at best, as unenlightened children. Today people and landscape are still poisoned by mercury. Many of the details call to mind California of the Gold Rush days. The damage to California was less because the time period was shorter, not because our forebears were superior to the Spanish.

Also in October, **Ellen Huppert** reported on medieval Morocco, especially its cities. Morocco was ruled by a succession of dynasties, each of which built its own capital city. Fez, Marrakesh, Rabat (the current capital), and Meknes were all capitals at one time or another. Islam was in large part an urban religion, with its cities featuring the essential mosques, schools (*madrassas*), and markets. Ancient Morocco had been the site of

Phoenician, Greek, and then Roman trading centers. The Arab conquest brought an Arab population, but a large population of the indigenous Berbers remained and converted to Islam. Besides trade throughout the Mediterranean area, Morocco benefitted from important trade in gold from Ghana to the south.

Fez is one city that has been widely written about. It was on an ideal site, on two hilltops, the crossroads of north-south and east-west trading routes. Plenty of water was available with a river as well as numerous springs. Founded in the eighth century, it had a population of native Berbers, Arabs, Jews, and even a few Christians. The city began with walls around each hilltop settlement until an all-encompassing wall was built after 1075. Fez was an important commercial, military, and governmental center. Unlike Roman cities, the streets were not laid out on a grid, but wandered through the town. Streets were narrow, probably because traffic did not use wheeled vehicles. Camel, donkey, and horse caravans needed less room to maneuver than carts or carriages did.

The architecture of Moroccan cities was much influenced by that of Andalusia in Spain, characterized by the horseshoe arch and glazed tiles. By conquering the southern part of Spain, the Moroccan dynasties had the benefit of the sophisticated culture of that area.

Distinctive of Morocco are the many fortified villages called *ksours*, many distinguished by handsome brickwork. The villagers worked the surrounding lands, but their strongholds allowed them safety during the frequent civil wars.

Morocco was unique in north Africa, as it was never conquered by the Ottomans. When European states undertook the conquest of Africa in the nineteenth century, Morocco was spared. It was only in 1912 that France declared Morocco a "protectorate," a situation that ended

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in 1954 with independence and a restored royal dynasty.

This January **Lyn Reese** discussed two articles from *A Faithful Sea: The Religious Cultures of the Mediterranean, 1200 - 1700*, edited by Adnan Husain and K.E. Fleming. In the first, Kate Mallette revealed the existence of a Sicilian Muslim community in Southern Italy called Lucera. Established by Frederick II in about 1223, its main purpose was to serve as his dependent source of loyal imperial troops. Lucera's success in agriculture was also useful, in particular their well established farming methods; local medicine, crafts, and animal husbandry contributed positively to the monarch's endeavors. Although completely subservient to Frederick, the 20,000 or so inhabitants were allowed to run their own internal affairs, choosing their local leaders and town judges.

Inevitably Christians reacted negatively to a relatively large Muslim mercenary army in their midst, with the popes, particularly Gregory IX, leading the charge. Frederick II, labeled a proto-Muslim by some, was called out for upending the Crusader requirement to force conquered Saracens to choose between death and conversion. Instead, he spent considerable time in the enormous castle he built in 1233 near the town and used the well trained Lucerine cavalrymen and archers in his wars, both on the Italian mainland and abroad. It took the Angevin reign of Charles II, during the papacy of Boniface VIII in the Jubilee year of 1300, to finally end this Muslim community. Most of its inhabitants were slaughtered or enslaved and their wealth, property, and livestock taken. On the ruins of their main mosque Lucera's current cathedral was built.

In the second essay John Tolan highlighted issues facing Christians living in the city of Tunis under the rule of the Hafsid emirate (1229 to the Ottoman takeover). Tolan's primary

source is a document drawn up in 1234 which contained forty short articles dictated by Pope Gregory IX in response to specific inquiries by Dominican and Franciscan friars serving the Christian trading communities in North Africa, where the emir had granted privileges to some Italian and Spanish maritime cities. The economic and strategic importance of a Christian presence in this region clearly required some practical responses from the Church. What also had to be taken into account was the complex nature of the European Catholic communities. The friars sought to serve not only merchants and longshoremen, but also fugitives, captives, slaves, and even lapsed Crusaders who on their way to the Holy Land were ducking out of their service.

Tolan groups the friars' questions into categories, ranging from allowable trade items, to problems of conversions within families, to the nitty gritty of the long-distance transportation of goods and even Muslim pilgrims on their way to Mecca. In Tunis, unlike Christian communities in Europe, the only punishment the friars could use was spiritual. Thus, the Pope's responses could only include the punishment of excommunication, or the lesser one of Mortal Sin. Citing earlier canon law, he also ruled when goods for sale to Muslims were illicit or licit.

In concluding her presentation, Lyn asked the group how the Pope might respond to some of the friars' questions. Some examples: Should family members shun a member who converted to Islam? Can the friars perform sacraments in a Muslim-ruled country with few clergy and limited consecrated vestments if necessary? Although the selling of iron and lumber to Muslims during times of war was obviously forbidden, was it also illicit to sell "tiny knives and teensy-weensy nails?" Could and should Christian servants or slaves who took care of Muslim children secretly baptize these children? The group began to score high in this "game"

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with their understanding of both the inflexibility of the Church's requirements for Christian actions as well as the practical need for some leniency.

Editor's Note: In lieu of Lorrie O'Dell's writing up the Medieval Studies reports, each presenter kindly took on the task.

New Members

Welcome to **Phyllis Grilikhes-Maxwell** and **David Hirzel**. Phyllis (Ph.D. psychology) has just left a 30-year teaching career at City College of San Francisco. She is the author of one book and is working on a second. She is also the wife of long-term member Ross Maxwell, adding another working couple to the Institute's roster. Maritime historian (and architectural designer) David's studies in polar exploration have resulted in several books and plays, "with more on the way." His Terra Nova Press is actively seeking unpublished first-hand accounts of maritime and polar experiences for consideration.

Ann Harlow curated the current exhibit at the Berkeley Historical Society, "*Art Capital of the West*": *Real and Imagined Art Museums and Galleries in Berkeley*, which opened in October with a presentation by Ann and a talk by Peter Selz, founding director of the University Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive. Since then Ann has been giving talks and tours. On February 18 she will speak at the Bancroft Library Roundtable. The exhibit continues through April 2.

Autumn Stanley continues to publish her children's books with two more coming out this year: *My Sign's Bigger than Your Sign* (from Heart to Heart Press in Kentucky) and *The 13-lamb Traffic Jam* (from Amazon's e-publishing CreateSpace). She writes: "Naturally, I hope members who have young children or grandchildren (or neighbors' or friends'

children), ages 6-10, will want to see these books." She also noted that all four reviews of *The Princess with the Purple Hair* (2015) garnered five stars.

On January 20, at 6 pm **Taryn Edwards** will present "The Unveiling of Andrew Smith Hallidie: A Short Talk about His Life and Portrait Restoration" at the Mechanics' Institute Library. She notes: "You've seen his portrait hanging in MI's Library, you've ridden on a cable car, but what do you *really* know about Andrew Smith Hallidie? After his arrival in California during the Gold Rush, he quickly rose to meet the challenges of the frontier by using his gumption and his father's patented wire rope to build bridges, ore transportation systems, and most famously the San Francisco cable car. By the end of his life in 1900, Hallidie was a leader of the state's industrial endeavors and a champion of the region's libraries and educational institutions." The event is free but reservations are desired (www.milibrary.org).

Monika Trobits reports that "interest in my book, *Antebellum and Civil War San Francisco*, remains consistent and later this month, on Tuesday evening, January 26, I will be speaking for the San Francisco Westerners at L'Olivier French Restaurant in the Jackson Square district of the city."

Judith Robinson has completed the first two of four books of family history. She is currently working on a history of the Kip Family, which includes the first Episcopal bishop of California, the Right Reverend William Ingraham Kip (1811-93, bishop 1853-93), her great-great-grandfather. "The histories rely on numerous family archives, including memoirs, letters and photographs; genealogies were traced from earliest known ancestors to 21st-century descendants; several myths were corrected."

Dot Brovarney is revising an article on Ukiah horticulturalist and botanist Carl Purdy (1861-1945) for publication in 2017 in *Fremontia*, the journal of the California Native Plant Society. It will be part of a special theme issue about California's native bulbs. On another topic, after a year of research on Mendocino County's Leonard Lake, Reeves Canyon, and the characters who inhabited this remote place, Dot has begun to write, with an anticipated publication date of 2017 for her book.

Dot also added interesting details about her research. The Purdy family's archives revealed Carl's close personal relationships with several professional colleagues including Luther Burbank, Alice Eastwood, longtime curator at the California Academy of Sciences, and Willis Jepson, who wrote *Manual of the Flowering Plants of California* in 1925, a publication that continues to be updated and published today. In the Jepson Archives at UC Berkeley Dot discovered letters Purdy had written to several prominent California botanists as an inquisitive young man, with questions about plants he encountered in Mendocino's backcountry. This correspondence, his study at various herbaria, his own fieldwork and garden experiments, as well as his botanical friendships, provided Purdy the education he needed for a life as a nurseryman specializing in West Coast native bulbs. His career expanded to include landscaping for private estates and Yosemite National Park after his tenure as garden manager under John McLaren at San Francisco's Panama Pacific International Exposition.

Who will be the next newsletter book review editor? Perhaps some of you noticed that a space has replaced the name of Autumn Stanley in the masthead. After many years of seeking members to review members' books and editing the results, Autumn has resigned. The position is open; if you are tempted to take on these duties, talk with Autumn, and then with me.

Santa Zanni
by Steven Levi (2015)

To enter a book with no expectations and a completely open mind is an enormous pleasure: sometimes the book disappoints, but sometimes the adventure is cheap crack! Happily Steven Levi's *Santa Zanni* was the latter. I began it with no idea what to expect or who I was going to meet. I finished with ears and mind full of as marvelous a group of zanies as ever performed with a Commedia dell'Arte company, and I knew a whole lot more about the how and why of California politics between 1910 and 1920 than when I crossed into the city limits.

The characters are sharp and true, drawn with incisive, literate and witty descriptions, reminding me of Steinbeck. In a few vivid strokes we understand the character's background and how it forms her (or his) reasoning, perceptions, and values. And like Steinbeck, the characters who live in *Santa Zanni* live in real situations and real politics of the time, not the predictable ones of Commedia invoked earlier. How could anyone resist Rudolph after Levi's introduction?

"He was called Rudolph the Red because he looked Russian. Or Bohemian, someone who was born east of any civilized part of Europe. German or Austrian he was not, and Giovanni, the barber from Palermo, who had been in Santa Zanni since 1906, said Rudolph wasn't Greek or Portuguese, so that didn't leave much of Europe for Rudolph to call home.

"So he was Rudolph the Red, the foreign-looking, bearded gnome who called Santa Zanni home. His English was fluent and he used words most people only read in out-of-town newspapers. He also had an accent that was so thick you could pour it on your pancakes. He was always dressed in workman's clothes and wore heavy black boots that were never shined but never looked scuffed either."

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The story proceeds to reveal the growth of unions and railroads, the organization of farm laborers, woman suffrage, religious hypocrisy (and sincerity), and brothels, and ordinary families in a town “north of San Francisco.”

I had a problem getting into the story, because I had not been warned that the characters were not “real.” I couldn’t find Santa Zanni on a California map—which led to a lot of other questions. So I e-mailed Steve to ask about it. He replied that the book was specifically written to give students a snapshot of life in Northern California between 1910 and 1920 and that “almost all of the people and events happened somewhere in California during that time period. The historical backdrop is true.” It is a dramatic, interesting, memorable narrative, constructed as historical fiction, with accurate historical facts and people who feel very real, but are not historical persons. Storytelling is a great way to teach history.

What more could anyone—student or not—want? Be warned about the fiction element, but ultimately, just enjoy and learn. The book is available from Amazon in a Kindle version, but not in printed form.

– *Bonda Lewis*

continued from the front page:

in elementary algebra taught by a retired math professor from the University of Chicago. I expected a small group but from the first day, the classroom was packed with gray heads. For weeks, we solved equations together on the blackboard and diligently did our algebra homework. (When was the last time *you* did algebra homework?)

My interest in science remains scattershot. I’ve been reading Thomas Forrest Kelly’s *Capturing Music*, a history of the invention of musical notation in Western Europe by Guido D’Arezzo, a medieval Umbrian monk. (Undoubtedly, the

book also piqued my interest because Guido is my father’s name.) It’s a beautiful book, with lavishly illustrated pages of medieval and Renaissance manuscripts and a handy CD. The story grabbed me, because I had always taken for granted the notations in my piano books. Musical notation happened mostly because of new music that began to appear about 900 years ago. Monks had always learned music simply by aurally memorizing straight-line Gregorian chant (the way I learned it in Catholic grammar school). As music became polyphonic, the singers needed guideposts to hang on to. Voila! Written notes, staves, sharps, flats, etc. The book’s difficulty increased as the music history grew more complex. The book evolved into a story about mathematics, cutting time into little pieces, giving it measures such as tempo, pitch, and dynamics.

The popular press and arts produce plenty of fodder for newly-minted geeks. I read *The New York Times*’ “Science Times”—the paper’s most popular special section—every Tuesday. Every day I get terrific postings on Facebook from “I Fucking Love Science.” Yes, that’s its name and it’s a serious site. Today, posts offered NASA’s new maps of the oceans and information about the dreadful Zika virus. Sci-fi movies have grown in popularity and sophistication. (I exclude such pop adventure movies as “Star Wars.”)

Recently, my science interest hit home across the sea. A cousin in Italy has started La Nuova Scuola Pitagorica (The New Pythagorean School) dedicated to the Greek philosopher, mathematician, and vegetarian. The organization is based in the modern city, Crotona, Calabria where Pythagoras settled in the sixth century BCE, when it was Kroton. My cousin is a humanist who writes about Pythagoras’ interest in peace and women’s issues. The Aquinian essays he sends to me are in highly-literate Italian, and reading them is a challenge that sharpens my senses.

Finally, Christmas brought me Mary Beard's *SPQR: A History of Ancient Rome*. Not much science. Beard does calculate the size of Roman army and the empire's population—not an easy task. But I'll bet she used algebra for it!

Needed: more Front Page articles. Since we changed the format of the newsletter, I have relied on a cache of articles volunteered by members. Now the cupboard is bare! Please consider writing an article, about 800 words, on any aspect of history you wish—practice of the craft, new discovery or perspective, a challenge, a biographical sketch or book commentary—the possibilities are numerous.

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