

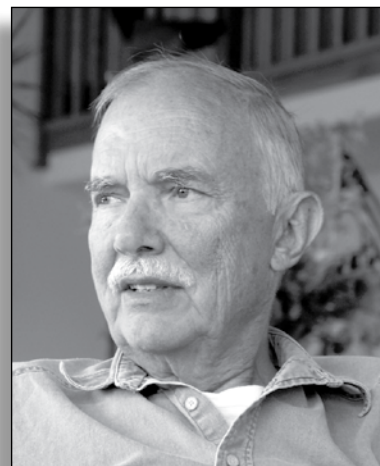
SCIENCE AND THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION

During the past eight years, many American scientists voiced their distress over repeated examples of White House manipulation, suppression, and distortion of scientific reports and advice. In the recent political campaign, candidate **Barack Obama** promised to “restore integrity to U.S. science policy, and ensure that important decisions are made on the basis of the best possible scientific evidence.” In his inaugural address, President Obama made that promise official, saying “We will restore science to its rightful place...” He has begun to fulfill this pledge, but it remains to be seen whether the damage done under his predecessor can be redressed and a new start made in the critical relationship between government and science.

Obama has begun very well indeed in filling the top science and technology policy and management positions in his administration. As I wrote to the *New York Times*, “if [they] were confirmed, no president since the days of **Benjamin Franklin** will ever have been so well served in matters scientific.” The nominee for his science advisor is **John Holdren**, formerly of UCB and my successor at the Harvard Kennedy School, a preeminent expert in energy, climate, and nuclear proliferation – the three issues at the top of the new government’s long-term agenda. Like Holdren, the initial round of five science nominees are all Academy of Science members, two with Nobel Prizes. All are experienced in the real world of policy and international cooperation and negotiation. All have advised presidents of both parties,

and – most importantly – all are devoted to looking for the truth and acting on the facts. Their influence will help create legitimacy and accountability in government. At last, politicians will no longer be able to invent technical “facts” to suit their political aims. In all my years as a civil servant and appointee by presidents of both parties, I have never seen such a brilliant set of choices.

In setting a policy agenda, Obama has also set many of the right priorities. He has promised to “make a national commitment to science education and training,” to “double the federal investment in R&D over a 10-year period,” to “harness science and technology to address the ‘grand challenges’ of the 21st century,” and to “create the environment that will allow American innovation to flourish by making the R&D tax credit permanent, streamlining our patent system, eliminating the capital gains tax on start-ups and small businesses, and promoting the deployment of next-generation broadband networks.” The new



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administration has also indicated that it would approve congressional funding for stem-cell research and take serious steps to replace reliance on fossil fuels, both to decrease dependence on imported fuel and to enable this country to take a leading role in the global effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

It is one thing, however, to set the right course; it is another to make sure that the machinery of government will take us in that direction. Two key steps need to be taken to assure success:

The President needs to give a senior White House official a clear mandate with the clout to ensure that not only the agencies, but the staffs in the Executive Office of the President too, carry out

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his pledge for transparent government, protection for scientific whistle-blowers, and reliance on objective, independent, and competent scientific advice. His science advisor-nominee, John Holdren, would be the appropriate choice for this assignment, if he is confirmed and is given the titles Director of the Office of Science and Technology, and Assistant to the President for Science and Technology, and Assistant to the President for Science and Technology – a senior executive appointment first given to **D. Allan Bromley** by President **George H.W. Bush**.

The second broader step would involve empowering science to make its contribution to economic recovery, and in the process contribute to solving longer-term, important issues of climate change, sustainable energy, and nuclear non-proliferation. Will the research community be given the opportunity to contribute significantly to solution of such problems? Or will the political rhetoric to that effect prove hollow after all? That remains to be seen and is not something presidential good intentions alone can guarantee.

Skeptics will be quick to point out that science and politics have been and always will be strange bedfellows. Science only answers questions when ample, verified data are available, and then qualifies the answers with all remaining doubts. Politics searches for the most salubrious answer that will satisfy most of the stakeholders and protect their own political futures. The President is using his “bully pulpit” – and his tax policy – to urge help for the middle class “and the poor who wish to be middle class,” rather than the rich. Scientists cannot avoid being seen as members of the elite even if their pay is middle class; their case for a bigger piece of the short-term stimulus pie may not be easy to make.

Skeptics will also note that while pledging a doubling of science budgets is great campaign rhetoric, Congress disposes. With budgets in a critical squeeze and the nation in financial crisis, science may be lucky to avoid deep cuts. And both politicians and scientists will differ over

what needs to be done in such complex issues as providing health care for all, exploring space, deciding whether to build new nuclear power plants, improving mass transit, and regulating new pharmaceuticals. Because of the economic crisis, the nation faces a serious, difficult problem of meshing short-term and long-term needs. Over the long run, the knowledge science produces will increase economic security and contribute to a lasting recovery by enabling the country to maintain its economic competitiveness and well-being. In the short run, however, the nation needs to get its financial house in order and get contracts to idle factories, and jobs to low-skilled workers paving roads and repairing bridges.

The first draft of the *Recovery and Reinvestment Act* makes a serious effort to integrate short-range and long-range planning. It contains an impressive array of technically innovative investments intended to strengthen the economy in the long term. These include enhancing the electric power grid, expanding broadband communications services, accelerating development of sustainable energy sources, and searching for new technologies and help for old ones (for example, to make coal environmentally acceptable through carbon sequestration). On top of all this, both research and science and technical education are in for a significant boost.

But despite the tendency of Washington-watchers to measure political effectiveness by dollars promised and even dollars voted, what really matters is what happens to the money and how much effect it has. If the new research money is simply spread around the academic disciplines, it will be great for higher education, but will be a long time contributing to national problem-solving. One solution to this problem is an investment strategy called “Jeffersonian Science,” which Professor **Gerald Holton** and I have helped formulate. The concept is simple: identify the nature of the most difficult, long-term problems and make funding available for research by the brightest basic researchers, those in the best position

to be creative and visionary. Obama’s stated agenda seems to lend itself very well to this approach.

But how can the outcomes of Jeffersonian research find their way into the economy? There are basically two ways. For highly innovative approaches, government may need to use its funds not only to subsidize research, but also to stimulate a market for novel solutions. The other strategy is to create a favorable climate for start-ups by encouraging private investment. While candidate Obama was clear in his plan to levy no capital gains tax on new and small firms, which certainly would be attractive to angel investors and venture capital firms, there has been little discussion at the outset of the new administration of how the interface between research and commercialization can be stimulated. It has been a long time since the U. S. Department of Commerce was an aggressive supporter of policies to enhance research-based commercial innovation. Home of the National Institute of Standards and Technology and the Patent Office, Commerce must be empowered to take the lead in this effort.

In sum, then, while we have a terrific team of technical leaders named for key roles in government and more are expected, it is rather as though we citizens, watching from the bleachers, are just now seeing our players coming out of the tunnel into the field. How will our smarter, more energetic team, with a terrific new coach, fare against the traditional opposition – from entrenched interests, ideological foes of scientific knowledge, and pressures to meet immediate demands rather than make fundamental innovations? The outcome of the game is not certain, but our team deserves wholehearted support from its fans.

Branscomb has served as Director of the National Bureau of Standards, Vice President and Chief Scientist at IBM, and on numerous governmental and academic advisory panels on scientific and technological innovation, including the Committee on Science Policy advising candidate Obama’s campaign. ♦

LIFE AND TIMES AT SIO

I came to SIO quite by accident. After graduating from Stanford in engineering physics, I married skier **Nancy Chapin** and spent the WWII years working in aircraft and rocket design. A postwar slump left me looking elsewhere – hopefully in La Jolla, where I had spent boyhood summers. A friend, **Walter Munk**, at that time married to Nancy's sister, **Martha**, had just completed his postgraduate work at Scripps and suggested I join his small research group to design instruments. Director **Harald Sverdrup** invited me to come, either as an engineer or a graduate student. I enrolled as a student in fall 1947, and never looked back.

My class included seven others, **Palmer Osborne**, **Townsend Cromwell**, **Jack Wickham**, and four Argentine naval officers. There were also about fifteen post-military trainees from a class ahead of us, many of whom left without being granted degrees through failure to pass the required language exams. To my knowledge, **Doug Inman** and I remain the only survivors of this group. Most of us lived in abandoned Marine NCO quarters on the site of the present married student housing. We called the area “Torrey Pines Tenements.”

Over the Christmas holidays in 1947 I was sent to Hawaii to install a “long-wave” recorder at the end of a pier in Maui. My instrument was a much-simplified version of an earlier design, constructed by Munk, **Hector Iglesias**, and **Ted Folsom**, which had been operating for several years at the end of the Scripps pier.

Emeriti Website

The UCSD Emeriti Association maintains a website:

<http://emeriti.ucsd.edu>

Clicking the NEWS, PROGRAMS & MEETINGS button will allow you to view past issues of this newsletter. The website also provides the constitution and by-laws, lists of members, and minutes of meetings.

Records from the Scripps instrument were virtually useless because of surf noise, but those from Maui were almost noiseless and revealed a pronounced spectrum of long-wave activity, which Walter interpreted as resonant oscillations of the basin between Maui, Lanai, and Molokai Islands. These results awakened my interest in long waves, which would become my principal research focus.

My second year (1948) was marked by completion of required courses, the addition of three “temporary” war-surplus office buildings on the site of the present director's office (two for students and one as our first instrument shop), and the infusion of a new crop of students, including **Chip Cox** and **Joe Reid**, both now emeriti. Chip lived aboard a 110-ft. WWII PC boat, purchased for a pittance as war surplus. He scrapped the interior and installed refrigeration and remote engine controls so that, except for anchoring, he could operate the vessel single-handedly from the bridge. But fishing interfered with studying, so he leased the boat to a scoundrel who sailed off to Ecuador and never returned.

I spent that summer prepping for my German exam and building a small house in La Jolla at the end of a winding dirt street off Windansea Beach. I also learned to surf, spurred on by **Towny Cromwell**, who had built a house next door. Towny and his wife, **Kay**, then engaged Nancy and me in a baby race, in which we were soon outnumbered, thus firmly establishing Cromwell's Law that all SIO children conceived in La Jolla are female. Cromwell got his degree under visiting Professor **Ray Montgomery**, but was killed in an air crash in 1958 after having discovered the equatorial Pacific undercurrent that bears his name.

Fall 1948 marked the departure of much beloved Director Sverdrup to head



By W. G. Van Dorn
Research Oceanographer Emeritus

the Norwegian Polar Institute and the appointment of **Carl Eckart** as SIO's surrogate director, while LCDR **Roger Revelle**, a 1936 Scripps graduate and acting director in absentia, served out his naval commitment at the Office of Naval Research. Through Eckart, Roger began the transformation of a small biologically-oriented research institute into a burgeoning, multifaceted oceanographic hydra. Roger started by luring ocean- or earth-science related researchers or entire groups from other institutions to come and work at Scripps, expanding facilities or constructing new buildings to accommodate them. He brought down ocean engineer **John Isaacs** and his assistant **Willard Bascom** from Berkeley, and chemist **Ed Goldberg** from Chicago. He incorporated the UC Division of War Research on Point Loma, including physicists Eckart, **Leonard Liebermann**, **Russ Raitt**, and **Fred Spiess**. He borrowed buildings and pier space from the Navy electronics facility on Point Loma, purloined three Navy tugs to support our marine operations (**Horizon**, **Baird**, and **Paolina T.**), and built a radio station atop the hill behind Scripps to keep track of them. All of this happened before the end of 1951, when I first met Roger, who then succeeded Eckart as di-

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rector. Meanwhile, I completed my measurements of wind stress on the Mission Bay yacht pond and began to write my dissertation. These measurements stand today as the most reliable ever reported.

The winter of 1952 brought a sequence of events that were to shape my life for the next three decades. The first was President **Truman's** authorization for the Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory to proceed with "Operation Ivy" – a secret project to construct and test the world's first thermonuclear fusion device at Eniwetok Atoll in the Marshall Islands, scheduled for November. The second was the planning and execution of SIO's longest two-ship geophysical cruise, the Capricorn expedition, scheduled for September, 1952.

These two events were connected coincidentally by **Edward Teller's** announcement at a late March LASL planning meeting that "Mike" (the nickname for the device) might release as much as ten times the energy estimated when the design had been set the previous November. This quantum escalation required revision of the Ivy Op-Plan to include evacuation of 12,000 people from the atoll and the firing of the device by radio from a ship at sea instead of from a bunker on the atoll. Scripps expertise was called in to examine the possibility that the rim might be blown away, generating an "artificial" tsunami of potentially dangerous proportions.

Accordingly, Capricorn was rescheduled to include participation in Ivy to the extent of geophysical examination of atoll structure for explosion sensitivity and installation of wave measuring instrumentation within and outside the atoll and on six distant islands. In case dangerous waves were generated, arrangements were made for a false "tsunami" alert to be issued from the newly established Tsunami Warning System in Hawaii.

After much discussion at SIO, Isaacs was put in charge of intra-atoll observations, Bascom, aboard the *Horizon*, was charged with planting two moored raft-recorders on top of nearby seamounts, and I was to provide portable long-wave recorders and supervise their installation

by graduate students on six remote islands. Munk, aboard the *Horizon*, would interpret raft signals to Isaacs aboard the task force command vessel, *Estes*.

It was an exciting time. Mike was detonated on Nov. 1, only exceeding the design energy by a factor of three (10.5 MT). But the explosion crater, a mile across, came within ten yards of bursting into the ocean. Walter wisely decided to report a giant wave as a recording glitch, so as not to trigger a tsunami alert. But the *Horizon* was clobbered by fallout when a wind shift blew the mushroom cloud in her direction as she desperately sought to escape. Significant waves were recorded at all my distant islands. Then, by sheer coincidence, on November fourth, the second largest "natural" tsunami of the century radiated from a magnitude 8.2 earthquake off Kamchatka, producing waves that inundated Waikiki, destroyed my wave gauges in Hawaii and Guam, and washed away the new Officers Club on Midway Island after I had just assured the island commander that it was perfectly safe. Had that earthquake occurred *three days* earlier, hardly anyone cognizant of Operation Ivy would have considered it an accident.

Following Ivy, SIO's participation in Pacific nuclear testing became a permanent function that was to last another six years. Isaacs continued to head up central area activities, while I maintained distant island stations. Isaacs's responsibilities expanded to using the *Horizon* to monitor ocean radioactivity from fallout, later continued throughout his career by **Ted Folsom**. My activities increased during the International Geophysical year (1956-1957) to include Palmyra, Fanning and Jarvis Islands, and Tahiti, Rurutu, and Takaroa in French Oceania.

All of our island installations required a great deal of scuba diving, involving setting anchors in soft coral at 200 feet to minimize wind waves, and anchoring heavy electric cable across flat table reefs to recorder shelters above sea level. Our diving gear advanced with the times, from the original dual-hose Aqualung, mounted on a tank strapped to one's back, to a comfortable back pack, with twin tanks

and single hose leading to a mouthpiece equipped with a demand valve. The equipment was maintained in a special shop at a new SIO Diving Facility headed by **Jim Stewart** and **Earl Murray**, who conducted mandatory training classes.

Meanwhile, during the early 'fifties, Roger invited **Per Scholander** and his "Scandahoovians" to SIO and built them a Physiological Research building. Scholander, like Kipling's Elephant's Child, was curious about most everything: how mosquito larva could live for years trapped in ice which was opaque to oxygen; how birds could walk on ice without their feet freezing; how giraffes could pump blood up a 12-foot neck. We spent many a happy vacation together.

Roger also brought in **Gustav Arrhenius**, **Harmon Craig**, and **Hans Seuss** to date sediments using isotope chemistry. He brought in **Dave Keeling** to do atmospheric chemistry. He got **Vic Vaquier** to study paleomagnetism, and **Ben Volcani** to study diatoms. He fostered Munk's appointment as head of SIO's new Institute for Geophysics. Walter later got his own new redwood building, designed by famed architect **Richard Neutra**, and lured a host of future IGPP faculty, the first of whom were **George Backus** and **Freeman Gilbert**.

Among new institutes were the Visibility Laboratory, under **Seibert Duntley**, and the California Cooperative Fisheries Investigation, headed by Isaacs. Isaacs, my titular boss during the testing years, was a unique figure of large proportions and prodigious intellect. Without ever graduating from college, he managed to become a full professor of Ocean Engineering in UCSD's department of Applied Mechanical and Engineering Sciences (AMES), which he helped establish. He worked tirelessly, wrote prodigiously, never published anything, and died of (self-diagnosed) cancer in 1978. Few today have any awareness of his former influence.

In the early 'fifties, Nancy and I built a home on Muirlands Drive, handcrafted of redwood, stone, and glass on 1.5 acres overlooking the golf course. We were frequently prevailed upon to recruit luminaries by showing them how assistant

professors lived in La Jolla. I recall having as many as four Nobel laureates to dinner at one time. The University's new physics department nucleus of **Keith Brueckner**, **Bernd Matthias**, and Liebermann became my closest friends.

Matthias, the caricature of a mad scientist, had a split appointment between Bell Labs, Los Alamos, and UCSD. He worked in his lab only at night, trying endlessly to discover the world's highest-temperature superconducting compound. His interest in extra-sensory perception prompted me to agree that the first of us to die would attempt to communicate with the other on the anniversary of his death. Bernd died in 1980 and, on his anniversary, Nancy and I were picnicking on the San Miguel River in Colorado with **Bob** and **Priscilla Duffield**, long time friends from Los Alamos and La Jolla. It was a beautiful sunny day, when suddenly black clouds rolled over the canyon rim and a lightning bolt sundered a tree 100 yards away, setting it on fire. "That's enough, Bernd," cried Nancy, the only one of us who remembered our long-forgotten agreement. Bernd responded with another bolt a mile away, and then rumbled away in the distance.

The 1960s brought about great changes in my way of life. Pacific nuclear testing ended and the last two tsunamis of the century occurred in 1960 and 1964, providing me with a wealth of material for publication. As the development of intercontinental ballistic missiles raised the possibility of offensive and defensive damage from waves produced by explosions in a marine environment, I became a member of an Atomic Energy Commission committee responsible for investigating such possibilities, directing experiments and doing calculations that ultimately led to the "Van Dorn Effect," the blockading of coastal shelves by waves produced by explosions in deep water offshore.

Perhaps my most significant unclassified work during the 1960s was to show that the multi-ring mountain structures surrounding the largest lunar craters exactly fitted the wave pattern from an explosion in water of finite depth, if "fro-

zen" at times corresponding to the cube-root of explosion energy. This result, obtained from lunar orbiter photographs five years before the Apollo landings, suggested that the primordial moon was internally hot enough to melt spontaneously during the temporary pressure rarefaction behind the shock wave from an impacting meteorite. The high-density layer upon which the "waves" traveled was found to be 55 km, as later verified by seismometers implanted by the Apollo astronauts. Did I discover the relic Moho on the moon? Only time will tell, but the four basalt rings surrounding the Chicxulub impact in Yucatan fit my generalized lunar curves perfectly, provided one takes the local Moho depth (35 km) between the earth's mantle and crust as the rigid layer upon which the waves propagated.

Having since early youth been vocationally involved with boats and boating, it occurred to me in 1969 to write a semi-technical book combining my experience with boats with that in oceanography. *Oceanography and Seamanship* took five years to complete, aided by many experts at SIO and elsewhere. My son, **Richard**, took a summer off to do the drawings. Published in 1974, O&S has enjoyed international success through two editions and six printings

In 1975, ONR lost interest in waves, and ceased its automatic support of my activities. Fortunately, I was invited to join Inman's new Coastal Engineering Research Center (CERC), and spent the next two years attempting to devise means for minimizing sediment accumulation in navy berthing facilities; interesting engineering work, but with little scientific reward. I was contemplating retirement when I was appointed chairman of the Physical Oceanographic Research Division, an onerous position that involved little else than selecting committees to review academic appointments and staff hirings and firings. I soon discovered that it was impossible to fire people from the UC system. They could appeal endlessly! Handling only a dozen endless appealers took all my time. I retired on December 31, 1979, and **Russ Davis** succeeded me as PORD chairman – for which he has never forgiven me.

With newfound freedom, Nancy and I bought a motor home and commenced a six-month tour of the western United States, ending up with the purchase of a ski chalet in Telluride, Colorado. For two years, we enjoyed the nirvana of retirement. Nancy took up weaving with a vengeance, and I wrote a novel about Ivy Mike. But ultimately, the work ethic kicked in again. We returned to a home in Del Mar and I sought re-employment at SIO. I found that the Defense Atomic Support Agency (DASA) had a renewed interest in the Van Dorn Effect, and went back to work on the "tsunami" problem. Having previously shown that the energy decay rate of tsunamis in the Pacific Ocean was independent of the position of the recording station, I obtained, not without some difficulty, tsunami records from the eastern Mediterranean, the Gulf of Corinth, and the Sea of Japan. These water bodies are all essentially enclosed, but still retain Pleistocene shelf margins at 200 m depth, as does the Pacific. Lastly, by assuming that all dissipation takes place on the shallow shelves, I was able to show that a common decay coefficient suffices to explain long-wave energy decay in all seas when applied only to the shelves, the deep basins acting merely as reverberating energy storage. When applied to the tides, the same coefficient accounts for about half the total dissipation deduced from astronomical observations, the other half having been previously attributed to turbulent flow through narrow channels and shallow seas.

During the past 17 years, I have done a second edition of *Oceanography and Seamanship*, written a classified history of the development and testing of the hydrogen bomb for Los Alamos archives, and published a volume of my publications, *Papers in Physical Oceanography* and two papers in the *Journal of Biochemical Engineering*. After surviving the sudden death of my lovely wife, I married again and Jane and I moved to a retirement community in La Jolla. Lately, I've published a narrative history of the role of Scripps in Operation Ivy entitled: *Ivy-Mike: the First Hydrogen Bomb*, and established a website to promote it: www.wgvandorn.com. ♦

A LOVE AFFAIR WITH OPERA



By Sheila K. Johnson

When I married my husband **Chalmers** 52 years ago this May I knew his academic interests meant we'd be spending a lot of time in Japan. But I didn't know that our other long-term connection would be with opera.

For the first thirty years of our opera-going we lived in the Bay Area, where the resident impresario at the San Francisco Opera for most of that time was **Kurt Herbert Adler**. In many ways, we owe our musical education to him. It was in San Francisco that we first heard **Elizabeth Schwarzkopf**, **Teresa Berganza**, **Pilar Lorengar**, **Leontyne Price**, **Marilyn Horne**, **Joan Sutherland**, **Monserrat Caballe**, **Christa Ludwig**, **Birgit Nilsson**, **Jon Vickers**, **Luciano Pavarotti**, **Geraint Evans**, **Nicolai Gedda**, **Alfredo Kraus**, **Jose Carreras**, and a host of others. We also travelled to Los Angeles to hear the New York City Opera on tour, and there we first heard **Beverly Sills** and a very young **Placido Domingo** in *Roberto Devereux*. And we visited San Diego while **Tito Capobianco** was staging his **Verdi** festival with singers like **Martina Arroyo**, **Cristina Deutekom**, and **Carlo Bergonzi**. We drove to Santa Fe nearly every summer, where in 1971 we first heard **Kiri TeKanawa** sing the Countess in **Mozart's** *Marriage of Figaro*, and twenty years later **Bryn Terfel** as Figaro and

Susan Graham as Cherubino. We went to New York for a *Ring* cycle, and occasionally saw an opera in London, Berlin, Milan, or Amsterdam. Alas, Bayreuth remains a dream that we never managed to turn into reality.

When we left the Bay Area twenty years ago friends who knew our opera-going habits wondered how we'd survive in sleepy (but sunny!) San Diego. Actually, we survived very nicely. It was in San Diego that we first heard **Renée Fleming** sing Rusalka and **Elizabeth Futral** in **Andre Previn's** *Streetcar Named Desire*. By the late 1980s the Los Angeles Opera was coming to life, and in the last few years we've heard **David Daniels** as Giulio Cesare in **Handel's** opera of that name and **Samuel Ramey** as a menacing Bluebeard in **Bartok's** *Bluebeard's Castle* and (in the same afternoon) a delightful **Gianni Schicchi**. In Long Beach we long ago heard a very youthful **Ruth Ann Swenson** as Baby Doe in the **Douglas Moore** opera, and more recently saw an amazing performance of **Thomas Adès's** *Powder Her Face*. And Santa Fe is now one day's driving closer to where we live.

Of course opera aficionados don't merely attend performances; they also buy records. Many, many records. In our case, we started buying LPs (33-1/3 vinyl discs) in the mid-1950s and eventually accumulated some 85 complete operas and approximately 500 singles – of recitals, song cycles, opera excerpts, and even some standard symphonic works and ballets. Quite a few of these records are now available as CDs, but some are not. For example, I have never seen a reissue of *Pecheurs de Perles* with **Pierrette Alarie** and **Leopold Simoneau**, nor **Madeleine Grey** singing *Songs of the Auvergne*.

Sometime in the late 1960s we succumbed to the siren song of a cassette deck with Dolby to reduce the tape-hiss. I can still recall lying on the floor of our house and listening to our first purchased tapes (of **Gustav Mahler's** *Symphonies 1*

and 3 conducted by **Jascha Horenstein**) and thinking I had surely entered music-lovers' heaven. But there was not all that much classical music available on cassettes at first, and what we chiefly did with our new acquisition was tape live broadcasts – from the Met and also the San Francisco Opera, and even **Donald Pippin's** innovative *Pocket Opera*.

I now look at this sizeable cassette collection with some amazement and chagrin. It seems I bought both 60-minute and 90-minute tapes and tried to figure out exactly how long each act was and how best to tape them. I very seldom "wasted" any tape, and so we sometimes switched tape sides or put on new tapes *in medias res*, missing some recitative or part of an aria. Even crazier, I have tapes of operas that are marked "*Tannhäuser, I*," "*Tannhäuser, II*," and "for end of *Tannhäuser*, see the end of "*Peter Grimes, Side II*." What was I thinking of? Did I really imagine it was going to be easy to find the last fifteen minutes of *Tannhäuser* by scrolling through the end of *Peter Grimes*?

We waited quite a while before buying our first CD player, but once we'd heard one and agreed with **Herbert von Karajan** that it wasn't so much the sound as the silences that mattered, we were hooked (again). I think our first CD purchase was a *Carmina Burana*, conducted by **Seiji Ozawa**. By then (the 1980s) we had also become more interested in chamber music, and as new CDs appeared we became avid collectors. At first, we bought only new performances of operas with new singers. But gradually we began to replace some of our old vinyls with CD rereleases. (Who could resist the set of **Beverly Sills** singing all three **Donizetti** queens, when these records were initially rather poorly produced?)

So we now have an entirely new, third set of operas we can listen to at home. This is, of course, not counting the many Live from Lincoln Center broadcasts we've videotaped over the

years. And, yes, we've also started to buy DVDs of operas because we find it a particularly instructive way to get to know one we've never seen before or never fully understood. High on our list of wonderful DVDs are Handel's *Theodora*, with a superb cast (and a rather modern Glyndebourne staging), **Alban Berg's** *Lulu* (also in a Glyndebourne performance), and *Pelléas et Mélisande* (conducted by **Pierre Boulez** at the Welsh National Opera). Since studio recordings of complete operas are becoming rarities because of the expense involved, these DVDs of live performances are doubtless the wave of the future.

Single CDs made by new artists, particularly when they feature an innovative repertory, are also quite irresistible. This is how, long ago, we first discovered **Raul Gimenez** (on a CD of Argentinian Songs), and more recently **Thomas Quasthoff**, **Ian Bostridge**, **Isabel Bayrakdarian** (whom we've since heard live in San Diego in *Pêcheurs de Perles*), and **Vivica Genaux**, whose wonderful *Arias for Farinelli* coincided with her appearance as Ariodante in San Diego.

By now almost 50 years of opera-going and listening would have created a strain on our memories had my husband not decided years ago to paste our pro-

grams into loose-leaf binders. He calls it our "argument settler," in case we have a disagreement about where and with whom we first heard **Wagner's** *Tristan* (well, that's an easy one: it was in San Francisco in 1970, with **Birgit Nilsson** and **Wolfgang Windgassen**). But these binders are useful for other reasons. I'm sometimes amazed, in leafing through them, to discover that singers who have since become quite famous, we first heard in various small *comprimario* roles. In recent years our binders also include an increasing number of obituaries of singers we once heard and loved.

One problem with our still growing CD collection is how to organize and access it. Right now complete operas are alphabetized by composer, and single CDs are alphabetized by singer. But recently we were "burning" a CD for a friend (yes, we do a bit of that too) and I wanted to include the Brazilian song "Azulao," which Isabel Bayrakdarian has recently recorded, albeit with a rather soupy orchestral accompaniment. I was greatly surprised to discover that in fact we had another, much older version of it with **Kathleen Battle** accompanied by **Christopher Parkening** on the guitar.

The answer to this problem, I've been told, would be to create a computer

program and to enter in it all of our CDs (and vinyl records? and cassettes?) and their contents. Then we could learn with the stroke of a key how many versions we own of **Schubert's** "Du bist die Ruh" or **Strauss's** *Four Last Songs*. But would we actually turn on the computer for this purpose before choosing a record to play during or after dinner? It seems to be hard enough for two people to agree on what sort of a mood one wishes to evoke . . . Do we want Baroque fireworks or quiet piano music? Are we up for **Beethoven's** late quartets, or *Peter Grimes*?

Sometimes I think that if one or the other of us has sufficient warning about the end of life, we will sit down and listen to each of our records one more time. Perhaps, like the stories **Scheherezade** told to the Sultan, it would even serve to postpone the inevitable. Shortly before my husband's mother died he made a tape of "favorite tenor arias," and when he played it for her she said, "It's so beautiful, I hate to go."

Exactly my thought as well. Opera and singing are so beautiful they can reconcile one to much else in life.

Sheila K. Johnson and her husband, Professor Emeritus Chalmers Johnson, live in Cardiff-by-the-Sea. ❖

THE EMERITI / RETIREE UNDERGRADUATE SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Some 80% of UCSD undergraduates receive financial aid, much of it through contributions and endowments administered by the Undergraduate Scholarship Council. Starting in 2008, the UCSD Emeriti Association and the UCSD Retirement Association agreed to pool member contributions to sponsor a Chancellor's Scholar. In 2008 the contributions totaled \$7,500 from the Emeriti, and \$3,000 from the Retirement Association, for a grand total of \$10,500.

The award of a Chancellor's Scholarship is based on academic achievement and other factors, including financial need. Each recipient is given \$5,000 a year over the four-year school term. This year, the award sponsored by our associations went to **Tisah Tuong**, a Muir freshman with an outstanding high school record, who plans to do a double major in Ecology and Literature.



Contributions for 2009 are now being solicited; please send your check (made payable to UC Regents) to:

UCSD Retirement Resource Center, Mail Code 0020, or by US mail to: 9500 Gilman Drive, Dept. 0020, La Jolla, CA 92093-0020.

These emeriti made generous contributions in 2008: **Nicholas Alexander**, **Richard Attiyeh**, **Kurt Benirschke**, **Colin Bloor**, **Martha Bovee**, **John Conlisk**, **Mary Corrigan**, **Russell & Frances Doolittle**, **Miriam & Peter Farrell**, **Gordon & Heather Forward**, **Paul & Clare Friedman**, **Joseph Gusfield**, **Robert & Sonia Hamburger**, **Jackie Hanson**, **Donald Helinski**, **Rose & Harvey Itano**, **David Kearns**, **Sandy Lakoff**, **Arend Lijphart**, **Masao Miyoshi**, **Martin & Betty Rachmeler**, **Richard Rosenblatt**, **Barbara Saltman**, **Jerry Schneider**, **Victor Vacquier**, **John Wheeler**, **Jacqueline Wiseman**, **Kiyoteru Tokuyasu**, **Gil Williamson**.

Please join their ranks this year!

UCSD Emeriti Association
9500 Gilman Drive, Dept. 0020
La Jolla, CA 92093-0020

Return Service Requested



Chronicles
March 2009

Mark Your Calendar!

Mohan Trivedi

*Head, UCSD Computer Vision and Robotics
Research Lab*

Public Surveillance Systems: Who's Watching Whom?

Wednesday, April 8, 4:00-5:30



Michael Kalichman

Director, UCSD Research Ethics Program

Stem Cells and Research Ethics: What Have We Learned?

Wednesday, May 13, 4:00-5:30



Michael Provence

Director of UCSD Middle East Studies Programs

Some Historical Roots of Today's Middle East

June 10 (Annual Business Luncheon, 11:30;
reservations required: \$18.00)



Chronicles

Newsletter of the UCSD Emeriti Association



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Jeff Calcara Layout and Design

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Forward queries, changes in mailing/e-mail address to **Suzan Cioffi, Executive Director, UCSD Retirement Resource Center, 0020, UCSD, 9500 Gilman Drive, 92093-0020; telephone (858) 534-4724 • Emeriti@ucsd.edu**