



Crackers

COSMOPOLITAN CLUB OF SANTA BARBARA INC.

Vol. LV No.15

Editor: Jim Munroe

Access the Cosmo website
<http://sbcosmo.com>
for current and archived issues of
Crackers and special events
information

Crackers Editor



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Next Program

February 19

NancyBell Coe, President of the Music Academy of the West, will entertain us with a talk entitled, "Tales from the Trenches: Backstage in Classical Music", sharing with her audience many humorous and harrowing experiences from her life in the performing arts arena.



Future Programs

March 5

Bruce A. McPherson "California's Fiscal Problems"

Bruce McPherson is a member of the Leadership Council of California Forward, a bipartisan public interest effort committed to bolstering democracy and the performance of government in California. Mr. McPherson was Secretary of State from 2005 to 2007, during which time he spearheaded election reforms, developed innovative ways to ensure the integrity of every vote, and made government more customer-friendly and efficient for Californians. Prior to entering politics in 1993, Mr. McPherson spent 26 years in the newspaper business as a reporter and then editor of his family-owned Santa Cruz Sentinel. Introducer is Warren Elliott.

March 19

Amir Abo-Shaer "DPEA - Dos Pueblos HS Engineering Academy"

DPEA was founded six years ago as a "school within a school" by Mr. Amir Abo-Shaer, a mechanical engineer who turned to teaching after several years in industry. DPEA consists of 33 students in each year class, with more than three times as many applicants as spots available, operating up to now in "spaces available" on the Dos Pueblos High School campus. The Senior Project was to build and operate a robot conforming to the specifications of the most prestigious international robotics contest FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology). In spring 2008, the Dos Pueblos team, Team 1717, won the regional competitions in both San Diego and Los Angeles. It then went on to place second overall in the International Competition in Atlanta, competing against more than 1000 teams from all over the world! All this was accomplished in six weeks, using one class room and a 7' X 15' machining closet to design, prototype, build and test a 150 lb. robot. AB Clarke will introduce.



April 2

Thomas Tighe "Direct Relief International"

Gil Ashor will introduce.

April 16

David Stuart "In Touch Health, Medical Robots"

Libation Liberation

Warren Elliott held the winning ticket.



Welcome Our Guests

Information was not available as of press time.

Bridge

Next Bridge will be 5 March
Top scorers on 5 February:

Ron White 4170
Ernie Bevans 3620
Ralph Edebo 3560



Join us for fun bridge. We gather up stairs after all regular meetings, and play until 3:30. Contact Pres Gould at 964-6568 or pwgould@cox.net.

Special Event

An Afternoon at the Opera – Sunday, March 15

Santa Barbara Opera matinee production of Carmen at the Granada with lunch preceding the performance. Lunch at 1:00 PM with the show following at 2:30 PM. Price for the lunch and Opera is \$105 per person. person for those who only want to attend the Opera.

Contact Albert Mercado (805) 967-2233, alnmercado@aol.com.



Spring Dinner Dance — Tuesday, April 28

It's a black-tie affair (if you wish) for you and your best lady at Santa Barbara Yacht Club. No Host cocktails at 6:00 pm, followed by a scrumptious dinner at 7:00 pm, with dining and dancing music provided by "City Lights Combo". Along with liberal quantities of red and white wines, our menu will offer 'Santa Barbara Yacht Club' salad (mixed greens, candied walnuts, feta cheese, and orange zest), entree choice of Prime Rib or Salmon, with Chocolate Mousse or Tiramisu for dessert. Tuesday night was selected so Cosmo will have exclusive use of SBYC and its parking lot. Priced at \$80 per person, where can Cosmo host such a special event at reasonable cost and so close to home? You bring your lady fair - Cosmo Club will provide a delightful evening for you both.

Reservation forms will be distributed closer to this

event. Jim Pattillo, Dance chair, 969-2796, jlpattillo@cox.net

Regular Events

Tennis

The Cosmo tennis group play doubles twice a week, and all tennis players are invited to join us. We play at a private court in Shadow Hills starting at 8 AM Mondays and Thursdays.

Call Bruce Long, (805) 692-4072
bruce93103@cox.net, or
Walter Mead, (805) 682-3045.



Cosmo Computer Society

Don't miss our next meeting on 17 February at 10 AM. Our special speaker is Vance Ronan, a Director of iTMP Technology, Inc. He will tell us about programs that they have developed for the iPhone, and possibly about "Go To My PC", and provide demonstrations.

We meet upstairs at the Elks Club on the third Tuesday of every month. Discussion starts at 10:00 AM. The feature presentation starts at 10:30 AM, concluding with a no-host fellowship luncheon in the Elks Grill. All Cosmo members are welcome.

Jim Stubchaer & Bob Gerity, Program Co Chairs
Chair, Howard Glenn,
(805) 967-2633 or hbglennc@cox.net.



S. A. G. E. Investment Group

We meet at 10 AM on the first Tuesday of each month at the Elks Club on the 2nd floor, followed by a no-host lunch in the grill downstairs. We do not select or buy stocks. Dick Evans, Chairman (805) 967-6930 or dickevens1@cox.net.



Golf

Weekly: All Cosmo members are welcome

Twin Lakes - Mondays at 9:00 AM (Tuesday on Monday holidays). \$9.00 for 9 holes (par 29); have fun improving your short game on an easy walking, flat course.

Ocean Meadows - Wednesdays at 8:30 AM. \$14.00 for 9 holes (par 36) with a play card. Improve your long shots.

Regular Golf every Monday at Santa Barbara Golf Club (Muni). Tee times from 9:30 AM to 11:00 AM.

Regular senior rate is \$20 for 18 holes, not including cart. Contact Ron Singer by Friday before the Monday if you would like to play to secure your tee time.

Golf Chair - Ron Singer (805) 684-1355, rsinger916@aol.com



In Memoriam

With sadness we report the death of Jim Rudy who joined Cosmo in 1995. Jim served our club in a variety of capacities, including President in 2002-2003 and lead editor for Crackers. We extend our sincere condolences to his wife Joyce and their family.

Last Meeting

(Editor's note: Jim Rudy was scheduled as editor of this issue of Crackers. I was away all last week and did not learn of Jim's death until Sunday evening 2/8. You will find information voids in this issue resulting from Jim's death and my absence from the 2/5 meeting. My thanks to Crackers stalwarts Harvey Turner, Don Margerum and Hank Macchio for providing their own unplanned renderings of Mr. Firestone's presentation – Jim Munroe).

Harv Turner...

"I can say without fear of challenge that Brooks Firestone' speech was right from the hip. It was obvious that no one in the political arena was exempt from his jibes, and that he is really not planning to re-enter the political arena himself. His outlook on the economic future of our nation seems to be gloom and doom for some time to come, and that we have not seen the last of this recession. A glimmer of hope: we have always survived these hard times before and we will eventually survive this one as well, but it will be only as the result of some hard times and hard work. His undisguised disgust for the greedy business folks with their hands out for government monies while handing out lavish bonuses and rewards was evident. While it appeared that he was swinging more at the Democrats than the other primary party, it was likely because they are the party who has the mandate to do something positive and they have not chosen to step up and do it".

Don Margerum...

"He started out by declaring that he was free at last to say what he thought, without the constraints of holding a public office or being a candidate for one.

Brooks took a very unhelpful view of government steps to reverse the financial meltdown we are experiencing along with the rest of the world. He thought Santa Barbara county and California were going to have a very rough time of it, but seemed to be against any of the bailouts by any name and from any administration. He ran his business without any help from the government, and stayed out of debt.

He had little hope that Obama's programs would do any

good, and said he'd met Obama some years ago being only impressed with his utter lack of experience in business or politics. He said Obama was just a blank slate waiting to have something written on it.

Brook's take on government, regulation, and oversight was that we had too much of all of them. He said any business could run circles around any auditor, and gave the example of answering an auditor's questions as to how many barrels of wine he had in his warehouse and the market value of his inventory. The auditor just wrote down Brook's responses without any further investigation. Overstating the value of assets is indeed behind most of today's financial problems, but Brooks felt that we needed to reduce regulation and oversight rather than tighten it up".



The Cosmo Tennis Group and spouses enjoy their annual brunch at the La Cumbre Country Club.

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OF SANTA BARBARA, INC.
COSMOPOLITAN CLUB



Hank Macchio...

Firestone has clearly exited politics – or at least the politics of Political Correctness. His no nonsense presentation which began with: “Why aren’t you mad?” questions about tax cheats in the US Cabinet, enormous amounts of Pork masquerading as the Stimulus Program now weaving its way through Congress, and the outright incompetence and ineffectiveness in Sacramento. He also pulled no punches on the disasters that are exemplified by both Santa Barbara County and Municipal governments. In Sacramento, Democrats represent Special Interests and Republicans are ideologues – no one represents the people of California.

As an example of Republican ideology, Brooks mentioned that while serving in the Assembly, he refused to sign a “No Tax Increases Ever” pledge pushed by the Republican leadership. As a businessman, Firestone refused to rigidly constrain the State government, saying that sometimes taxes are lowered and sometimes they are raised. Obviously, his position didn’t win any popularity contests within Republican ranks. As he put it, the Republicans in Sacramento, all of whom signed the pledge, were morally pure and totally ineffective. No wonder that the State has a \$42Bn budget shortfall and is in Washington with a tin cup to save the State employee union jobs.

On the economy, Firestone was Doom & Gloom. It’s

going to get a lot worse before an economic upswing, unless the Federal Government really screws things up to the point that the Recession that we are in would be only the opening act to a protracted downturn. Ever the optimist, Firestone felt that the State economy will bottom-out this year or early 2010, again with the *caveat* that the Feds can certainly make things worse. Asked about the business unfriendly climate in California, Firestone indicated that businesses and people vote with their feet. Though not mentioned, California had a net outflow of population in 2008, and as taxes and fees go up, more businesses leave.

What will fix the mess we are in? American individualism, entrepreneurship, hard work and maybe some common sense. As an example of common sense, Firestone mentioned that there’s a lot of oil offshore Santa Barbara County. Drilling Royalties would go a long way to solving the County’s lack of funds, and the State’s shortfall as well. But, then again, you have to deal with the Special Interests – environmentalists, Green Party members and the like – who presently control Sacramento. The message – get involved and take back the control of the State from the Special Interests, or be prepared for a lower quality of life in California.