



# Crackers

COSMOPOLITAN CLUB OF SANTA BARBARA INC.

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Next Meeting: **January 18**

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## Celebration of Life Mike Rodrigue

The Celebration of Mike Rodrigue's Life has been scheduled for Sunday January 21 from 2:00 to 4:00 at the Santa Barbara Club on 1105 Chapla. All are invited to attend.



Mike was an active and contributing member of the Cosmopolitan Club for 15 years and he will certainly be missed.

## The Board of Directors approved an incentive program to help recruit new Club Members:

If a current member brings a guest who is a potential new member, the guest will get a free lunch.

If by the next meeting the guest applies for membership, the guest gets another free lunch.

If applicant is approved by the Membership Committee, the inductee gets another free lunch.

The sponsor of the guests should contact the Club President upon arrival and he will provide the lunch voucher for the guest.

## Dress Code

The dress code going forward will be California Casual. Jackets and ties are always welcome, let the weather be your guide.

## Cosmo Joins Facebook

Cosmo now has its own Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/CosmoClubSB/>. You can also find a link to it on our homepage. All posts will be public, so that even members who have not yet joined Facebook can see our posts; however, if you have already joined Facebook, be sure to "like" our page and "share" our posts. If you have any questions or suggestions, please contact Editorial Assistant Cora Danielson at [cora.danielson@gmail.com](mailto:cora.danielson@gmail.com).

## Website and Online Membership Roster

Access the Cosmo website <http://sbcosmo.com> for current and archived issues of Crackers. Don Chalfant and Jim Stubchaer have updated our online system. Members will now be able to access the roster via the normal club website; a "tab" will lead to the password-protected roster. The password will be provided in the email that covers the distribution of the Crackers.

## Cosmo Members Ailing

Members Gil Ashor and Steve Ebbin are in the skilled nursing facility of Valle Verde. Curt Whiteman reported that Dr. Ebbin is in isolation there to prevent onset of infection.

If you learn that one our members is ill or injured, please notify Curt Whiteman at 220-6833, [whiteman@westmont.edu](mailto:whiteman@westmont.edu).

## Who Said That?

"Success is a lousy teacher. It seduces smart people into believing they can't lose." — Bill Gates

## NEXT MEETING

January 18, 2018

### “Our Relationship with China: Part 2”

Kevin Ryan will introduce his son, Eric Ryan, who gave a talk to the club on September 21, 2017 on several aspects of the US-China relationship. For his second talk, Eric will be emphasizing international trade in the Pacific region with China. Eric’s expertise on the subject comes from his experience running his own company in China for over 25 years. Ryan Security Technologies sources security equipment from the US, Canada, and other countries for sale to China. In the course of his business, Eric has become fluent in Mandarin and regularly meets with Chinese business officials and government representatives. In addition to US-China trade, Eric will continue his discussion on areas of tension between our two countries as well as each side’s perceptions of the other.



February 1, 2018

### “Beyond Bagels, Lox and Fiddler on the Roof: What is Jewish Culture?”

Charles Greene will introduce Rabbi Steve Cohen. Rabbi Cohen has served as the senior rabbi of Congregation B’nai B’rith since 2004, after nineteen years as the rabbi and Executive Director of the Hillel Foundation at UCSB. In his capacity as senior rabbi, Steve’s primary responsibilities include teaching adults and youth, guiding the development of the congregation’s educational, worship, social action and cultural programs, providing pastoral counseling for congregants in need, helping families move through the great passages of life with love and meaning, and working closely with the volunteer leadership of the congregation to build a vibrant Jewish community.

For his talk Rabbi Cohen will examine how many contemporary Jews reject traditional Jewish religious practice and belief but remain loyal to their Jewish heritage and identity. He will then ask members to look at the non-religious elements that constitute “Jewish culture” and discuss how such elements show up in a town like Santa Barbara in the year 2018.



## REGULAR EVENTS

### DISCUSSION GROUP

The Discussion Group meets once a month in the upstairs room immediately following regular luncheon programs. The future topics are:

January 18, Kevin Ryan: **Mass Murder- Blame The Brain or The Guns?**

February 15, Bob Weber: **Using BRAC Commission Procedure in Federal Budgeting**

March 15, Dan Creasy: **The Limitations of Quality Assurance in Healthcare**

April. 19, Gerard Kuiken: **The Philosophy of Oneness**

May 17, Gordon Bjork: **Intergenerational Transfer**

June 21, Jim Davis: **A True Faustian Bargain: Controlling Evolution**

### GOLF

Mondays we usually meet at the Santa Barbara Golf Club (Muni). Tee times most often begin at 10:15 a.m. Contact Ron Singer (805) 684-1355 or [rsiner916@aol.com](mailto:rsiner916@aol.com) by the prior Friday for your tee time. These outings are a great way to gain new members, so invite your friends. We also have games on Wednesdays and Fridays at other area courses. Contact Ron Singer to get on the mailing list. New members can use the website [cosmogolfclubsb.com](http://cosmogolfclubsb.com) to register and sign up for additional news.



### TENNIS

The tennis group plays doubles four times a week on a private court off 122 Patterson Avenue, behind the office buildings, starting at 7:45 a.m. Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. All tennis players are invited. Contact Harrison Stroud at (805) 653-5117, [stroud@hotmail.com](mailto:stroud@hotmail.com) or Jim Subject at (805) 964-2020, [jsubject@aol.com](mailto:jsubject@aol.com).



## LAST MEETING: January 4, 2018

Selling tickets were Ted Ross and Manny Espig as Paul Coyne hosted at the punchbowl. Vern Kemp performed the sergeant-at-arms duties. Bill Alexander, Jack Patterson, Orlando Ramirez and Bob Weber teamed up to handle the audio-visual duties. The Invocation was delivered by Bill Alexander.

### Wine Drawing

A 2012 Sauvignon Blanc from Speratus Vineyards was given to our esteemed president, Harvey Turner, seeing as he's a century older than the wine. Prof. Bill Veigele took home a Columbia Valley red blend from 2013 made by North by Northwest Winery.



## LAST MEETING

January 4, 2018

### The Romans in Germany: Conquest to Defeat



Dr. Gerhart Hoffmeister, Professor Emeritus of The University of California, Santa Barbara in the department of German and Comparative Literature was introduced by Gerard Kuiken. A native of Germany, he studied at the University of Bonn and received his doctorate from the University of Maryland. Gerhart is the author of several books and has lectured at conferences and universities in the United States and Germany.

As a child, his family moved to Bonn and lived near the ruins of a 2000 year old Roman garrison. The Rhineland, like Bonn, had been integrated into the Roman Empire. Dr. Hoffmeister desired to learn why all of Germany did not get Romanized as France and Spain had

Only the river valleys of the Rhine and Danube were under the firm control of the Romans. Rome's leaders knew this territory had to be held at all costs to avoid being attacked from the East. The German river valleys flourished as colonies due to supporting Roman Legions at garrisons. These garrisons eventually became towns. Military veterans then settled in the hinterland aided by built roads, bridges and entertainment complexes.

The Romans built walls 30 miles east and north of the rivers with garrisons stationed every 12 miles. The higher living standards at the troop encampments attracted some German tribes to the settlements who later joined the army to defend this frontier. Thus Rome was able to hold the Rhine and Danube Valleys for 400 years, influencing its culture.

But by the 4th century, the stability of the empire was threatened by the migration of eastern Germanic tribes moving across the rivers pushed by the invading Mongolian Huns.

Another factor in the European Cultural Development was Rome's increased focus on Britain and diminished attention to interior Germania. Thus most German tribes free of Rome dominance were allowed to preserve their own language, culture and history.

After the slide highlighted presentation, Dr. Hoffmeister responded to many questions and stimulating comments from the gathered members.

### Managing Editor's Note

The life stories of our Cosmo companions are a rich buffet of the human experience. To share a sampling of this fare, occasionally Crackers will publish a brief biographical sketch of one of our members. In the spirit of democracy, the choice of subjects and the language are entirely those of your editor, Sandy Jones.

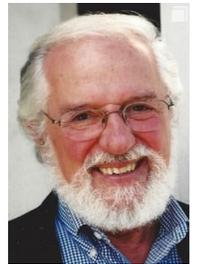
His first victim was Ron Singer. His second is Fred Sidon.

### Strategist in Seven Languages

Did you know that we rub shoulders at the Elks Club with a knight of the realm?

Actually, Fred Sidon—Chevalier du Semaine—is a nobleman twice over.

On March 4, 2005, Renaud Donnedieu de Vabres, Minister of Culture and Communication of France, made Fred a Chevalier, and in 2007, the President of the French Republic and Grand Master of National Order of Merit named him "Chevalier de l'Ordre du Merite" (Knight of the National Order of Merit), which is France's highest non-citizen honor.



That award is recognized, with the Legion of Honor, in the National Museum of Paris. Among his colleagues in the Order of Merit are President Charles de Gaulle, General Wesley Clark, President François Mitterrand, oceanographer Jacques Cousteau and other historic figures.



I sat down with Fred at Via Maestra, where they know him so well that they let us talk over a cup of coffee for two hours without even discreetly offering menus. To start the conversation, I tried a test question. Pretty sure that “cosmopolitan” is not an everyday word in any language, I said, “You have seven languages—can you say ‘Cosmopolitan Club in all of them?’

Pronouncing the words aloud, he jotted without hesitation on a paper napkin:

English—Cosmopolitan Club

French— Club Cosmopolitain

Italian, Spanish and Portuguese—Club Cosmopolitano

German—Kosmopolitischer Klub

Serbo-Croatian—Kosmopolitski Klub

Fred was born into a language potpourri. As a child in Belgrade, his American father spoke English, his mother Serbo-Croatian, his Austrian grandmother German and a White Russian governess French. When his parents were divorced and his mother married an Argentinian, he also learned Spanish. That cacophony apparently created a language appetite. When he was 18 he entered the University of Rome to add Portuguese and Italian—with Latin and Greek along the way.

The Korean War found him in the United States and draft bait. Two weeks ahead of the letter he enlisted in the Air Force and became a language interpreter at Keesler Field in Biloxi, Mississippi. The land of cotton and grits was not his natural habitat and so he quickly requested reassignment to “USAF Anywhere,” which turned out to be Idris Fued, an RAF base in Libya shared by the U.S. Air Force.

His assignment was intelligence, and his job was to go to town, ostensibly searching for off-base Air Force family housing but actually providing U.S. eyes and ears among the local people.

Fred talks with the twist of a smile and a sense of the

absurd beneath the serious. He said, “The closely-held top secret was that the 17th Air Force Wing was moving to our base. Walking around town, it was obvious to anyone who understood Italian—Libya had been an Italian colony—that the local landlords knew what was coming. They were already building apartments for the influx.”

And “The RAF had concertina wire around their perimeter with tough Cockney sentries. They had no theft, but American property seemed to have legs.” He leaned forward for emphasis, brows raised toward his bushy white hair. “We lost entire refrigerators.”

Thinking about it now, I imagine the scene: “Halt! Who goes there?” And out of the dark, “Only your friend Ali, with this little box of Hormel hams and Hershey bars and other local products.”

During his off-duty hours, just for fun he compiled all 46 of the world’s alphabets into a single book. To make better use of his linguistic mastery, the Air Force offered Airman First Class Sidon a direct commission, but that included a long-term commitment to the Reserve and so he declined. As a reward, he was reassigned back to his favorite place, Keesler field in Biloxi, where he was the only instructor/interpreter of French, Serbo-Croatian, Spanish and Portuguese. The saving grace was that he drove the only VW with Arabic license plates. “I could park anywhere. No Biloxi cop knew how to write the ticket.”

In 1959, he was discharged. He used his language skills to land a job as the Assistant Franchisee of the Compagnie Generale Transatlantique, a trans-Atlantic shipping line operating between New York, South Hampton, Le Havre, San Juan and La Guaira, Venezuela.

The franchise was based, despite its Atlantic operations, in Beverly Hills. The boss was getting ready to retire and Fred was in line to take over. The industry assumed that the shipping business was about ships. Fred decided it was about transportation. He introduced air-sea packages to include other destinations for minimal cost, and the business surged.

In a couple of years, Fred felt ready to take over the franchise, as promised. But now his boss showed no sign of retiring. In 1964 Fred resigned, but the home office didn’t want to lose him. Instead, they offered a challenge: confront their biggest business problem, the Caribbean market.

The shipping business there was controlled by a San Juan booking agent who represented the French lines while also running a travel agency, a conflict of interest. Fred cut the agent's affiliation with French Lines, making him just another travel agent. In his first year, the French Lines' business grew 600%. In 1967 he was promoted to Chef de Service, in charge of all American operations—Alaska to Argentina—of the 92 ships. Now the only bigger job was president, and that had to be held by a Frenchman.

Fred was career-blocked but—still in his 40's—too young to retire. Instead, in 1969 he walked away from the executive suite to join two former Rand consultants, and old friends, who had formed Kepner-Tregoe, Inc. to help corporations visualize and define their strategic missions. Fred took the business beyond the United States, opening offices in Buenos Aires, Sao Paulo, Caracas, Mexico City, Tokyo, Sidney, Singapore, Hong Kong, Manilla, Teheran, Milan, Wiesbaden, The Hague, London and Paris. Along the way he lectured at the Harvard Business School, Davos, the European Management Symposium, the International Management Institute and other elite executive meetings.

In 1980 he left that firm to found his own, the Princeton Overseas Consulting Group. Over the next fifteen years he advised the CEOs of Allied Signal, American Cyanamid, Grupo Alpha Electronics, Upjohn and dozens of other international companies, trade associations and non-profit organizations.

But he never took himself, or all those corner offices, too seriously. His promotional brochure was a palm-size, black-and-white folder featuring Alice talking to the Cheshire cat, and he often told clients, "You don't know where you're going, but you're making good progress." When questioned about his knighthood awards, he says, "The consuls kissed me on both cheeks. The Brits would never have done that but they would have called me 'sir'."

In 1993 he and his wife, Diane moved from Princeton to Santa Barbara, and two years later Fred retired. They immediately became interested in the nascent Opera Santa Barbara, and they helped mount its first production in 1994. Fred was elected to the Board in 2001 and President in 2004. In the meantime, in 1995 he was

elected President of the French Network of Santa Barbara. With over 100 members, the club meets to celebrate French themes—cultural, economic, cultural, cuisine and tourism. It is primarily this inter-cultural leadership that earned Fred the two knighthoods.

If you sit down with him at a Cosmo lunch, it's not necessary to address him as "sir" or "chevalier." Be prepared for a sophisticated sense of the absurd, and if you mention his last name—Sidon—pronounce it like a Spaniard saying "yes, sir"—"si, don."