Yunte Huang’s Odyssey
Finding an American Identity, With Help From Charlie Chan

Confronting Alzheimer’s
Our Economic Engine
Stem Cell Science
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Features

6 Fuel for California’s Innovation Economy
By Henry T. Yang and David Marshall
Our state’s prosperity — and, indeed, its future — depends on its investment in higher education, research, and the arts and sciences.

7 Engineering a New Science
The campus is making great strides in stem cell research, developing novel approaches to therapies and cures. A look at a new center, and its principal researchers.

10 Confronting Alzheimer’s
By Gail Gallessich
As a generation comes face to face with a disease that has no cure, the authors of a new book prescribe steps to take to reduce the risk of developing Alzheimer’s.

11 Mystery and Meaning in Charlie Chan
By Eric Banks
Looking beyond fortune-cookie aphorisms and racist stereotyping, Yunte Huang discovered a true American original in the Chinese-American detective who was always portrayed on film by non-Asians.

14 Looking Ahead: UCSB’s Long Range Plan
The UC Regents approved the Long Range Development Plan, but what does that mean at a time when enrollment needs to shrink, not grow?

Departments

CAMPUS POINTS 2
RESEARCH 4
THE CAMPAIGN TRAIL 15
BOOKENDS 16

SPEECH: Dignitaries and dignities... Page 14

An architect’s rendering of what the campus might look like in 2025. Page 14

Was Charlie Chan an iconic American or racist stereotype? Page 11

At work in the new Center for Stem Cell Biology and Engineering. Page 7

THE COVER
Yunte Huang, photographed in New York’s Chinatown, has written a book about Charlie Chan that has resonated with readers and critics as well as fans of the “honorable detective.”

Page 11
UC System’s Budget Gap: Not a Pretty Picture

The UC Board of Regents took the unusual step of devoting the entire public session of its March meeting to analyzing the system’s budget crisis and discussing the tradeoffs inherent in various scenarios for coping.

The university faces a stark gap between diminishing state support and rising operational costs — a gap that will grow larger in coming years unless UC finds a stable source of revenue growth. “This is not a blip. This is 20 years of reduced funding for the university,” President Mark G. Yudof told the board. “We need a long-term plan. Our collective job is to figure out how to do it.”

Yudof noted that UC already has made substantial budget cuts in the last few years, and that there are currently 8,000 faculty and staff positions unfilled. As the regents and UC administrators evaluate how best to go forward, preserving UC’s world-class research and education must be a priority, he said.

“In all the variables you hear today, there is one constraint and a guiding star we must follow and that is quality. Quality is non-negotiable.” Regents Chairman Russell Gould proposed the daylong workshop to give the regents the fullest picture possible of the fiscal dilemma facing the university and the difficult choices that lie ahead.

At UC Santa Barbara, the total budget shortfall for the 2011-12 year is projected to be $66.3 million.

Applications for Fall 2011 Up 7% Over Last Year

The campus received 63,303 applications for undergraduate admission for the fall, 4,311 more than last year, an increase of 7.3 percent. Of the total, 49,015 applications were from prospective first-year students and 14,288 were from applicants seeking to transfer to UCSB.

UC Santa Barbara has target enrollments of 3,900 first-year students and 1,500 transfer students for the fall, the same as last year. The campus’s director of admissions, Christine Van Gieson, said she was extremely pleased by the academic quality and diversity of the applicant pool. “We have to applaud all the great work being done by our faculty and staff to get the word out about UC Santa Barbara and our outstanding programs, which is reflected in the increase in applications from both California residents and non-residents,” she said.

All Gaucho Reunion To Mark 5th Year

Can it be five years already since the first All Gaucho Reunion? According to Assistant Vice Chancellor George Thurlow, executive director of the UCSB Alumni Association, attendance at the popular gathering, with events on campus and elsewhere, has just about doubled each year. The largest turnout yet is expected for this year’s installment, scheduled for Thursday through Sunday, April 29 to May 1.

The theme of this year’s reunion is “Relive, Reconnect, Rejoice!” You can find complete information on all events at the UCSB Alumni Association’s Web site (www.ucsbalum.com), where you also will be able to register online.

Hand Books: The 2011 edition of UCSB Reads began with Chancellor Henry T. Yang and his wife, Dilling, distributing more than 2,000 copies of “The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks” to students at Davidson Library. The book, written by Rebecca Skloot, tells the story of HeLa, the first “immortal” human cell line. An annual winter quarter event organized by the Library, UCSB Reads engages the campus and the Santa Barbara community in conversations about a key topic while reading the same book. The theme for 2011 was “Our Bodies, Our Cells: Exploring Identity.” A variety of free campus and community events and discussions about the book were held throughout winter quarter in public libraries and at UCSB.

Keep Tabs on the Campus With Facebook, Twitter

Want to keep up with research and other news about UC Santa Barbara? Thanks to our social media outlets, you can get the news even before the media has a chance to write about our campus. The Office of Public Affairs now has a page on Facebook, and on Twitter. If you’re already signed up for Facebook, search for the UC Santa Barbara News & Research page and indicate that you like us. Same for our Twitter page, UCSBNews.

But you don’t have to be a member of either Facebook or Twitter to get updates. Go to the UCSB home page (www.ucsb.edu) and look for the Facebook and Twitter logos in the left column. Click on those and you will see our posts to both pages.

On Facebook, you’ll get plenty of extras, including links to other publications that highlight UCSB research, as well as our new, staff-produced video interviews with UCSB scientists and others on campus.

Library Acquires 3 Millionth Volume

Davidson Library this year celebrated the acquisition of its 3 millionth volume — “Trees” by book artist Charles Hobson — with a series of special events and exhibits.

The 3 millionth volume acquisition was a milestone that celebrated the continuing growth and breadth of the UCSB library’s academic collections and achievements in support-
National Council Rates Graduate Programs
When the National Research Council (NRC) published its long-awaited report evaluating 5,000 doctoral programs in 62 fields at 212 U.S. universities, UC Santa Barbara’s position among leading research universities was significantly improved.

“We are very proud that among our 31 doctoral programs assessed by the NRC, 10 programs, or nearly a third, have a range of rankings reaching into the top five in the country; 14, or 45 percent, are in the range of the top 10; and 20, or nearly two-thirds, are in the range of the top 20,” said Chancellor Henry Yang.

Gale Morrison, dean of the Graduate Division, said the new rankings “reinforced the very high quality of our graduate programs. This assessment has provided a wealth of data about our programs, and others across the nation, which will be used to direct continued improvements and to ensure excellence in all of our programs.”

The NRC’s evaluations of research-doctorate programs are conducted by the National Academies every 10 to 15 years. The results of the last such evaluation were published in 1995.

Faculty Research Cited Often by Top Scholars
UC Santa Barbara ranks among the top U.S. universities in how often the work of its researchers is cited by other top scholars, according to an analysis by Thomson Reuters.

The citing of a scholar’s research (as represented by a published scientific paper) in another’s published work is viewed as a strong indication of the importance of the original work and the influence it might have.

Science magazine published the Thomson Reuters list of the top American universities and how they ranked in scientific paper citations. UCSB was fourth, behind only MIT, Caltech, and Princeton. Trailing UCSB were, in order, Stanford, Harvard, and UC Berkeley.

“Citation impact is widely accepted around the world as an important method for comparing the quality of research in science and engineering,” said Michael Witherell, vice chancellor for research. “UC Santa Barbara does better than any public university in the United States by this measure.”

Lighting the Third World, One LED at a Time
In Ghana and many developing countries, the lack of safe, adequate home lighting is directly linked to illiteracy, poverty, and health issues. Osei Darwka, president of Ghana Telecom University, wants every household in his country to replace kerosene with a healthier, safer, more environmentally friendly alternative that will allow schoolchildren to read and study in the evening. With help from the Institute of Energy Efficiency (IEE) at UC Santa Barbara, he is getting closer to his goal.

Partnering with Darwka and Engineers Without Borders, the institute developed a reading light that uses an LED eight times more efficient than an incandescent bulb, and a high efficiency solar cell to power it. “Two hours of daylight will provide an hour of illumination,” said IEE director John Bowers, a professor of electrical and computer engineering.

In the photo here, a student in Ghana does homework by the light of an IEE-produced solar-powered LED lamp. Some 12,000 lamps have already been shipped to Ghana, Haiti, and Kenya. The goal for 2011 is to ship 100,000 lamps to a total of seven countries. Distribution of the lamps is overseen by Unite to Light, a local nonprofit established to supply solar-based lighting to the developing world, and another Santa Barbara-based organization, Pangaea.

Exhibit Commemorates Reagan Centennial
In commemoration of Ronald Reagan’s 100th birthday, the Department of Special Collections at the Davidson Library has organized “The American Presidency,” an exhibition of printed materials, artifacts, and ephemera from the Lou Cannon and William Wyles collections.

“The items in the exhibit draw from a wide range of our holdings,” said David Tambo, head of Special Collections. “There are some quite unusual things that visitors will find interesting — from copies of books that Abraham Lincoln read and descriptions of how they influenced his life, to excerpts of interviews by Reagan biographer Lou Cannon that explore the question of who the ‘real Reagan’ was.”

The exhibition continues through April 29.

Pinnpoints

- U.S. News & World Report ranked UC Santa Barbara number 9 among public universities in its 2011 “Best Colleges” guide, and number 39 among all national universities, public and private. These are the highest rankings ever for our campus in the U.S. News listings.

- Cleanup and restoration of the campus’s 69-acre South Parcel has begun under the supervision of the Cheadle Center for Biodiversity and Ecological Restoration. UCSB and The Land Trust for Santa Barbara County announced that the tract would be permanently set aside as open space under a conservation easement agreement.

Nobel Prize Winner From the Class of 1983 Visits UC Santa Barbara
Alumna Carol Greider, the Nobel Prize winner whose solution to a fundamental problem in biology has stimulated the development of new therapeutic strategies for cancer and age-related diseases, returned to UCSB in January for a two-day visit that included a public lecture, a workshop with biology undergraduate students, meetings with faculty and graduate students, a reception at Mosher Alumni House, and a dinner hosted by Chancellor Henry T. Yang and his wife, Dilling.

Greider’s visit was part of the Frontiers in Cancer Research lecture series that brings prominent scientists to campus to meet with students and faculty members to discuss advances in the treatment and prevention of cancer. It is supported by the Cancer Center of Santa Barbara and the Doreen J. Putrah Cancer Research Foundation in partnership with UCSB.

Greider earned her bachelor’s degree in biology from the College of Creative Studies in 1983, and her Ph.D. in molecular biology at Berkeley. She is the Daniel Nathans Professor and the Director of the Molecular Biology and Genetics Institute for Basic Biomedical Sciences at the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine. She shared the 2009 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine with UC Berkeley molecular biologist Elizabeth Blackburn and Harvard geneticist Jack Szostak. They were recognized for their discovery of how chromosomes are duplicated during cell division, and how telomeres — the ends of chromosomes — and telomerase — the enzyme that forms telomeres — protect the chromosomes against degradation.

In an informal session with biology students at the College of Creative Studies, Greider discussed her undergraduate years at UCSB and her introduction to research. She also visited with staff and students in the Education Abroad Program office — she had studied abroad in Germany through the program while an undergraduate.

During her visit, Greider was honored by the UCSB Alumni Association with a Distinguished Alumnus Award.
External Research Funds Reach Record Level

Research support from external sources broke all records at UC Santa Barbara in the 2009-10 fiscal year. A total of $222 million was received from federal and state agencies, corporations, and foundations in fiscal 2010 — a 28 percent increase over the previous year.

“This dramatic rise in research awards, especially from federal research agencies, is a testament to the excellence and originality of the exciting research and creative activity at UC Santa Barbara,” said Chancellor Henry Yang.

Michael Witherell, vice chancellor for research, said the funding levels were directly attributable to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), the federal stimulus program. In 2009-10, the campus received $40 million in ARRA funds, awarded through extremely competitive programs run by federal research agencies.

Economic Forecast Project Gets New Leadership

Peter Rupert, a professor of economics and former Federal Reserve adviser, is the new head of the popular UC Santa Barbara Economic Forecast Project. The appointment is part of an overall restructuring of the research unit, which provides economic data, analysis, and forecasts to the community.

Rupert came to UCSB in 2007 from the Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland, where he had been a senior economic adviser for 13 years. His areas of specialization include macroeconomics, monetary economics, and labor and family economics. Vice-chair of the economics department, he is associate director of the Laboratory for Aggregate Economics and Finance, founded and headed by Nobel Laureate Finn E. Kydland.

Rupert noted that, while the Economic Forecast Project is best known in Santa Barbara for its annual book-length report and accompanying public presentation, “that happens just once a year. But there is new data all the time.” What can be expected in the future, he said, is a new Web site where users can find “frequently updated information, including commentary, on significant reports on the economy, housing, and other related issues.”

“I hope to make this project much more interactive,” he added. “We want this program to be more functional for the sponsors, subscribers, and others who can benefit from our services.”

The forecast project’s 30th Annual Santa Barbara County Economic Summit is scheduled for Thursday morning, May 5, at the Granada Theatre. Speakers will include Andrew Ross Sorkin, a columnist and chief mergers and acquisitions reporter for The New York Times, and the president of the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, Narayana Kocherlakota.

Findings

A quantum device designed by a team of UC Santa Barbara physicists led by Andrew Cleland and John Martinis was named the 2010 Breakthrough of the Year by the journal Science, the publication of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. The journal cited the UCSB researchers for designing “a gadget that moves in ways that can only be described by quantum mechanics — the set of rules that governs the behavior of tiny things like molecules, atoms, and subatomic particles. In recognition of the conceptual ground this experiment breaks, the ingenuity behind it, and its many potential applications, Science has called this discovery the most significant scientific advance of 2010.” Cleland and Martinis point out that their research is part of a larger effort to build a quantum computer using superconductors. (The accompanying image shows the first quantum machine: a mechanical, vibrating device, which is as long as a hair is wide.)

New species of sea slugs

Jeff Goddard, a project scientist with the Marine Science Institute, was working in the tide pools at Carpinteria Reef, in Carpinteria State Park, when he found a new species of nudibranch — a group of sea slugs noted for their bright colors and delicate forms. Recognizing it as new, Goddard carefully documented the living specimen before preserving it and sending it off to Terrence M. Gosliner, an authority on the taxonomy of sea slugs at the California Academy of Sciences in San Francisco. Gosliner named the new sea slug after Goddard when he described it in the online edition of the Proceedings of the California Academy of Sciences.

If current climate projections hold true, the forests of the Southwestern United States face a bleak future, with more severe — and more frequent — forest fires, higher tree death rates, more insect infestation, and weaker trees. The findings by university and government scientists were published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

“Our study shows that regardless of rainfall going up or down, forests in the Southwest U.S. are very sensitive to temperature — in fact, more sensitive than any forests in the country,” said Park Williams, postdoctoral researcher in the Department of Geography. Past forest studies have shown that warmer temperatures are

GIRLS BEHAVING BADLY?

Scholar examines aggression, violence, and arrests

Films such as “Mean Girls” and “Fab Five: The Texas Cheerleader Scandal” strongly suggest that aggression and violence among teenage girls are now common. Research by a UC Santa Barbara sociologist, however, has found that the mean-girl phenomenon is mostly hype.

“If you look at the actual numbers of incidents, you don’t see dramatic spikes,” says Nikki Jones, an associate professor of sociology. “But you do see dramatic spikes in the number of arrests — particularly for African-American girls.” Zero tolerance for violence in the schools and law enforcement’s mandatory arrest policies help explain the higher arrest rates. This data, Jones adds, is widely available, but often ignored. More troubling, she says, is the fact that real problems facing girls today are lost in the mean-girl furor.

In her new book, “Fighting for Girls — New Perspectives on Gender and Violence,” Jones and her co-editor, Meda Chesney-Lind, professor of Women’s Studies at the University of Hawaii at Manoa, take a close look at the institutional responses to the changes in adolescent girls’ behavior, many of which do not consider the contexts that generate violence. “The book is about fighting for girls — fighting on behalf of girls,” Jones explains. “We want to shift the conversation from what girls are doing to how adults can help them. We tend to think we have to fix girls, but what we have to fix are the settings in which they find themselves — schools, neighborhoods, the juvenile justice system.”

For her research on violence and aggression among adolescent girls, Jones recently received the New Scholar Award from the American Society of Criminology’s Division on Women and Crime.

Nikki Jones

Andrea Estrada
associated with wildfires and bark beetle outbreaks. Joel Michaelson, a professor of geography, was co-author of the study. (The photo shows dead Ponderosa pines in the Jemez Mountains at Bandelier National Monument, victims of drought and suspected infestations of bark beetles.)

Calling the results "extremely surprising," researchers from UCSB and Texas A&M University report that methane gas concentrations in the Gulf of Mexico have returned to near normal levels only months after a massive release occurred following the Deepwater Horizon oil rig explosion. Findings from the research study, led by oceanographers David Valentine of UCSB and John Kessler of Texas A&M, were published in Science Xpress, in advance of their publication in the journal Science. The findings show that Mother Nature saw to the removal of more than 200,000 metric tons of dissolved methane through the action of bacteria blooms that completely consumed the immense gas plumes the team had identified in mid-June. (The photo shows the CTD Rosette system used to collect water samples.)

A potent drug derived from an evergreen tree may soon save the lives of some patients with the deadliest form of breast cancer. Scientists at UC Santa Barbara, in cooperation with scientists in the pharmaceutical industry, have discovered the mechanism by which this drug kills cancer cells. The team has isolated the drug’s action in the test tube as well as in cancer cells. The results were reported in two studies published in Molecular Cancer Therapeutics. The articles featured work from the laboratories of Mary Ann Jordan and Leslie Wilson, professors in the Department of Cellular, Molecular, and Developmental Biology. "This anticancer drug, called maytansine, when linked to a tumor-targeting antibody, shows promising early results in clinical trials on patients with metastatic breast cancer," said Jordan. (The accompanying photo is a fluorescence microscopy image of abnormal mitotic spindles in four breast cancer cells that were treated with antibody-linked maytansine.)

FRONT ROW SEAT AT GUANTÁNAMO

When Canadian-born Omar Khadr pleaded guilty last fall as part of an agreement with prosecutors at the U.S. military commission at Guantánamo Bay Naval Base, Lisa Hajjar, an associate professor of sociology, was there to witness the proceedings.

The most serious of the five charges against Khadr, who has been held at the naval base since October 2002, was the killing of a U.S. soldier in Afghanistan in July of that year. The Pentagon accused Khadr of throwing a grenade that killed Special Forces sergeant Christopher Speer. Khadr was 15 at the time.

"The case has a long and ignominious history," says Hajjar. "We have a child soldier who was severely wounded when he was taken into custody; subjected to brutal interrogation and indefinite detention; and was one of the first 10 people charged — of all the 779 people who have passed through Guantánamo."

In all, Hajjar attended three hearings on Khadr’s case. Under the terms of the plea agreement, Khadr was sentenced to eight years in prison, the first of which he must serve at Guantánamo. At the end of that year he can apply for repatriation to Canada, where he will be subject to Canadian laws.

Hajjar’s interest in Khadr’s trial is part of a larger research project that examines legal responses to American torture. "I’ve been interviewing lawyers and others involved in all kinds of work coming out of the war on terror, including people who defend Guantánamo detainees before the military commissions, and others who are habeas counsels for detainees who haven’t been charged and want to challenge the legitimacy of their indefinite detention," she says. "I’ve also studied the legal work involved in Freedom of Information Act litigation because so much of the policy instituted during the (George W.) Bush years was secret."

With the outcome of the Khadr case settled, questions now focus on the future of the Guantánamo detention center. "What does this mean for the way in which we’re going to enforce our international legal obligations?" Hajjar asks. "There are still 174 people in Guantánamo, 76 of whom have been cleared for release. In some ways, the Omar Khadr case stands as a precedent, and we don’t yet know how it will affect the future of Guantánamo or the military commissions."

Prospects

Eric McFarland, a professor of chemical engineering, is participating in an ambitious project funded by the U.S. Department of Energy. The $122-million project aims to develop a cost-effective method of generating energy from sunlight by mimicking photosynthesis, the process plants use to produce energy. McFarland will help develop automated systems to allow enormous numbers of chemical compounds to be rapidly synthesized and screened to identify those with the most potential for use in an artificial photosynthesis system.

- The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, a part of the National Institutes of Health, awarded $2 million to UCSB as part of the renewal of its Programs for Nanotechnology Research. The program is focused on helping researchers develop tools based on materials designed at the molecular level to detect and deliver treatments for heart, lung, and blood diseases. "Through collaborations with some of the best medical schools in the U.S., our long-term goal is to apply these nanotechnology systems to clinical diagnosis and therapeutics for major unmet U.S. medical issues," said Craig Hawker, professor of materials, chemistry, and director of the Materials Research Laboratory.

For more information on these and other exciting UCSB research developments, visit www.ucsb.edu.
The Engine of California’s Economy?

HIGHER EDUCATION

By Henry T. Yang and David Marshall

Experts predict a shortfall of one million college graduates in the state’s work force by 2025.

California’s prosperity depends on its investment in higher education, research, and the arts and sciences.

In 1790, President George Washington proposed to Congress the establishment of a national university. “Knowledge is, in every country, the surest basis of public happiness,” he declared, recommending “the promotion of science and literature.” In 1796, he told Congress that only a public university could afford to assemble “the ablest professors in the different departments of liberal knowledge” (referring to a liberal arts education). Funding efforts to “encourage and assist a spirit of discovery and improvement,” Washington argued, were “very cheap instruments of immense national benefits.” He reminded Congress that “a flourishing state of the arts and sciences contributes to national prosperity and reputation.”

As our Governor, the Legislature, and, indeed, all Californians struggle with the challenges of the state’s enormous budget deficit, we must remember that California’s economic prosperity depends on its investment in higher education, research, and the liberal arts and sciences. The Public Policy Institute of California has warned of a “shortfall of 1 million college graduates” in the state’s work force by 2025. Since California’s economy is “increasingly dependent on highly educated workers,” the institute has noted, a lack of such workers “poses a serious threat to the state’s economic future.” The institute’s report was written before the state’s radical $2.25 billion, 20 percent cut to higher education in 2009 forced the California Community Colleges, the California State University, and the University of California to plan reductions in enrollments, and well before the current proposal to cut a combined total of $1 billion more from the budgets of the UC and CSU systems.

The report focused on the “skills gap” between the needs of the state economy and the available work force. Yet an educated work force cannot be reduced to skills in a narrow sense, nor to the mere number of college graduates produced. As a research university, the University of California plays a special role in public education. Not only do UC graduate programs produce the cutting-edge researchers and entrepreneurial leaders needed to maintain California’s culture of innovation and creativity, they train the professors needed to teach our millions of college students.

UC provides undergraduates with a comprehensive liberal arts education in a research university environment. In a research university, students work with faculty who produce as well as impart knowledge; the classroom is a laboratory for new ideas, discovery and invention in all fields. Last year, 53 percent of UC Santa Barbara seniors reported that they had collaborated with a professor on a research or creative project. Students learn firsthand new interpretations and new ways of thinking as they work with scientists, scholars, and artists who define their fields.

Parents, alumni, and business leaders tell us that the state needs college graduates who have the skills of critical thinking, empirical reasoning and communication; they want graduates with broad-based knowledge, technological, scientific and cultural literacies, and the ability to collaborate and solve problems, rather than narrow vocational training or a particular major. They want workers and colleagues who can evaluate evidence and make informed ethical choices, who have the linguistic and cultural competencies to function in the multilingual, multicultural, and global society that California has become in the 21st century. They tell us that economic prosperity in California depends on citizens with analytic skills, creativity, imagination, innovation, collaboration, and entrepreneurship. These are the hallmarks of the liberal arts education that makes American universities admired around the world.

If public education has been an engine of class mobility, helping to create a middle class, then it benefits the public more than it benefits individuals. Public education provides the educated work force that is vital to the state’s economy, and it produces graduates with the creativity to sustain and renew California’s economic competitiveness. A UC liberal arts education prepares students to be citizens in 21st-century global California. California’s elected leaders would do well to remember Washington’s words about “a flourishing state of the arts and sciences.” In today’s knowledge-based economy, the threat to the University of California and the state’s Master Plan for Higher Education is a threat to California’s prosperity and reputation. At a time when California’s economic future depends on producing more college graduates and better-educated citizens, the state must invest in public education. As Washington knew, both democracy and prosperity depend on it.

Henry T. Yang has been chancellor of UC Santa Barbara since 1994. Last year he also served as the elected chair of the Association of American Universities. David Marshall is executive dean of the College of Letters and Science and dean of Humanities and Fine Arts. A version of this essay was published in the San Francisco Chronicle and is reprinted here by permission of the authors.
Stem Cell Research at UC Santa Barbara

ENGINEERING A NEW SCIENCE

The campus is making great strides in developing novel approaches to therapies and cures

A cell-sorting device used in the campus’s Center for Stem Cell Biology and Engineering. It exploits electric and magnetic forces for continuous cell separation.

IMAGE BY ALEJANDRO ANDRETTA
stem cell research has tremendous potential to transform medicine through the development of regenerative cellular therapies for many insidious diseases and conditions. These include neurodegenerative diseases such as Alzheimer’s and Parkinson’s, as well as spinal cord injury, heart disease, blindness, arthritis, and diabetes.

UC Santa Barbara has moved quickly to the forefront of stem cell research in just a few years. “What’s remarkable about UCSB’s stem cell program is that it has ramped up from no presence in stem cell biology or engineering to being an internationally recognized site,” says Kenneth S. Kosik, Harriman Professor of Neuroscience Research and co-director of the Neuroscience Research Institute, of which the Center for Stem Cell Biology and Engineering is a part. “In a short time, it has become a major academic program.”

The center was established free of federal funding to allow research on all stem cell lines (there are government restrictions on the use of human embryonic stem cell lines). Renovation and construction of the center’s laboratories, funded by a $2.2 million grant from the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM), is now in progress. The institute has also awarded UCSB a $1.3-million grant for a training program to support graduate and postdoctoral fellows. More than 30 UCSB faculty members from a wide range of disciplines are affiliated with the campus’s stem cell center.

PIONEER IN RESIDENCE

“The recent recruitment of Jamie as our newest faculty member was a tremendous coup for both the Department of Molecular, Cellular, and Developmental Biology (MCDB) and the university,” says Joel Rothman, the department chair. “As co-director of the Center for Stem Cell Biology and Engineering, Jamie has helped catalyze the spectacular growth in stem cell biology research at UC Santa Barbara.”

James A. Thomson
Professor, molecular, cellular, and developmental biology
Co-director, Center for Stem Cell Biology and Engineering

Thomson, often called the “father of stem cell research,” pioneered work in the isolation and culture of non-human primate and human embryonic stem cells. His research has significant implications for regenerative medicine, making it possible to generate patient-specific, immunologically matched stem cells without using embryos.

‘FROM BENCH TO BEDSIDE’

“What makes us unique is our interdisciplinary blend of fundamental molecular biology and bioengineering research and the collaborations that have formed on campus and beyond. We are collaborating with clinical centers in California to transition our discoveries from bench to bedside.”

Dennis Clegg
Professor, molecular, cellular, and developmental biology
Co-director, Center for Stem Cell Biology and Engineering

Clegg studies neural development and neural degeneration. He specializes in the study of macular degeneration, a blinding disease, and how stem cell biology may help lead to a cure for it.

Three general areas of stem cell research are being investigated here: molecular mechanisms, biotechnology and bioengineering, and regenerative medicine. Combining these approaches, researchers are able to investigate targeted diseases — and potential therapies and cures — in a multidisciplinary fashion.

This aspect of the research, crossing boundaries, particularly between the sciences and engineering, helps set UCSB’s stem cell effort apart.

Pierre Wiltzius, a physicist who is the Worster Dean of Science, put it this way in an interview with Convergence, the campus’s science and engineering magazine: “Our biggest opportunity for the sciences and engineering together is, I think, to take advantage of the interdisciplinary that’s in UCSB’s DNA — its value, and the uniqueness of its strength here, can’t be overemphasized.”

“Our world-class faculty in engineering and the sciences,” he added, “and the free flow of ideas here between disciplines, result in a very fertile and stimulating climate — one that promotes the scholarship and research which earns us a place in the upper ranks of major universities.”

UCSB’s approaches to stem cell science are different from those at California medical schools and emphasize basic biological questions and engineering challenges related to stem cell research. The three co-directors of the center (see
sidebars) bring very different backgrounds to the program.

The leadership includes James A. Thomson, who has conducted groundbreaking research on non-human primate and human embryonic stem cells. The recipient of two recent major prizes — the 2011 King Faisal International Prize for Medicine, and the 11th annual Albany Medical Center Prize in Medicine and Biomedical Research — he also holds appointments at the University of Wisconsin and the Morgridge Institute for Research.

Among its many current projects, the center is now a partner in an international collaboration with the Keck School of Medicine at USC and several other research institutions to develop a treatment for blindness caused by age-related macular degeneration. “UCSB scientists in the Center for the Study of Macular De-

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THE ENGINEERING PERSPECTIVE

“Here we have world-leading stem cell biologists and innovative technologists working together. We develop novel instruments and methods for high throughput biology — new techniques for cell sorting and directed molecular evolution. The exciting thing about the center is the tight coupling, or marriage, between technology and stem cell biology. Breakthroughs in biology and medicine correspond with breakthroughs in technology.”

H. Tom Soh
Associate professor of mechanical engineering and of materials
Co-director, Center for Stem Cell Biology and Engineering

Soh is involved in developing innovative technologies in molecular diagnostics and therapeutics for personalized medicine. This research includes novel methods for sorting human embryonic stem cell derivatives, molecular screening and directed evolution, and integrated biosensors.

WHAT ABOUT NANOMEDICINE?

“This past year, research at the Center for Nanomedicine involving co-founder Erkki Ruoslahti, also affiliated with the stem cell center, resulted in a major discovery of a novel and more effective treatment approach to diseases like cancer. Similar collaborations arising from interdisciplinary research may further promote important new discoveries spanning the exciting new realm of stem cell biology and regenerative medicine.”

Jamey Marth
John Carbon Professor of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology
Duncan and Suzanne Mellichamp Professor of Systems Biology
Director, Center for Nanomedicine

Marth is engaged in collaborative projects with UCSB and Sanford-Burnham Medical Research Institute scientists to develop nanotechnology platforms for biomedical research, including the means to rapidly detect and manipulate the cellular components that are responsible for health and disease.
Confronting Alzheimer’s

A generation comes face to face with a disease that has no cure

By Gail Gallessich

With the aging of nearly 80 million baby boomers, Alzheimer’s disease is an impending epidemic that requires new approaches to both its prevention and management.

“We have no satisfactory treatment for Alzheimer’s disease,” says Kenneth S. Kosik, the Harriman Professor of Neuroscience Research and co-director the Neuroscience Research Institute on campus. “Drugs don’t have much of an impact. If you have a problem for which neither surgery nor pills will work, then the medical system is really more of an obstacle than a help.”

He says people don’t generally know this—they think that if they have a medical problem, they should seek help within the medical system. “It need not work that way,” he says.

Kosik has co-authored a new book, The Alzheimer’s Solution: How Today’s Care is Failing Millions and How We can Do Better, that takes a hard look at the disease and offers many new ideas about Alzheimer’s and approaches to it. Kosik, who is both a neuroscientist and a physician, wrote the book with Ellen Clegg, a science writer and communications specialist for the Eli and Edythe L. Broad Institute of Harvard and MIT.

The authors state that the best way to cope with the disease is to try to treat it before it starts. They note that the degeneration of the brain can begin as much as 10 years before there are any symptoms.

“If you think getting old is simply about losing neurons, read this book,” says Michael S. Gazzaniga, director of UCSB’s SAGE Center for the Study of Mind.

“Many things change, and the good news is that, by realizing the complexities of aging, there are many ways to make life pleasant and rewarding.”

The authors outline a bold vision of one-stop centers that would provide expertise and reliable information on a range of topics: dietary regimens, physical and cognitive exercise programs that may help reduce the risk of dementia, and palliative measures to reduce suffering.

The centers they describe would take a family-oriented, personalized approach to care and prevention, creating an atmosphere conducive to adult learning, and facilitating personal growth in areas that patients have enjoyed over a lifetime, including the arts, dance, social interactions, and a host of other possibilities.

Kosik has created just such a center in Santa Barbara, the nonprofit Center for Cognitive Fitness and Innovative Therapies (CFIT), as a test site for a new way of helping with Alzheimer’s disease. It provides, at one location, all of the services known to decrease risk. It is the first full-service, community-based “cognitive shop” in the nation.

Educating oneself about both the medical and lifestyle factors that increase the risk of Alzheimer’s disease is very important. These include cardiovascular factors such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and diabetes—or a tendency toward diabetes. “All of these increase risk for Alzheimer’s disease, and all of those things can be controlled medically,” says Kosik. “We already knew these things were bad for you; the new information is that all of those things are risks for Alzheimer’s disease, too.”

REDUCING THE RISK OF DEVELOPING ALZHEIMER’S

The authors of ‘The Alzheimer’s Solution’ identify steps you can take to reduce the risk of developing the disease.

**Exercise.** Exercise keeps every organ in the body healthy, including the brain.

**Eat a healthy diet.** The Mediterranean diet is one that has shown documented results in reducing the risk of developing Alzheimer’s.

**Reduce stress.** Chronic stress—such as divorce, losing a home, or losing a job—is not good for the brain. Consulting counselors, coaches, social workers, and spiritual guides can help with recovery.

**Keep your brain active.** Present your brain with cognitive challenges. To help reduce risk, take advantage of computer programs with graded series of cognitive challenges that keep the brain active.

**Keep up a social life.** Don’t get isolated. Many studies have shown that those who age successfully—people who reach their 90’s and are still healthy—are statistically more likely to be people who have friends and maintain active friendships.
Racist Stereotype or Iconic American?

Yunte Huang decodes the mystery and meaning of Charlie Chan

By Eric Banks

Yunte Huang has a vivid memory of his first encounter with Charlie Chan. The year was 1998, and Huang, who had come from China to the United States as a student seven years earlier, was pursuing a doctorate in English literature at the University at Buffalo and working two tedious jobs to support himself — delivering food for a Chinese restaurant and working security at a Korean-owned wig store. An inexpensive way to while away the weekend hours was to scrounge moving sales (which Buffalo, shedding its population base, offered in abundance) for bargain-basement books. On one of these trips, he happened upon an old set of Grosset & Dunlap novels bound in crimson: *Charlie Chan’s Caravan* and *Charlie Chan Omnibus*, collections of the novelist Earl Derr Biggers, who created the “honorable detective” in the mid-1920s. Huang snagged the books for a buck apiece.

“I’d heard of Charlie Chan, of course,” recalls Huang, now a professor of English at UC Santa Barbara and a specialist in American poetry, trans-Pacific literature, and translation. “But I had a pretty negative idea, as you might expect, about who he was. Then I read the books and thought, Wow, this is something quite different.” He was tantalized by what Chan — or Biggers — did with language, his ersatz singsong pidgin and the gnomic fortune-cookie aphorisms that rolled off his tongue. And he was intrigued by the wild strand in American popular culture that could give rise to an overweight, Chinese supersleuth. Murder, like potato chip — cannot stop at just one, the chubby detective once philosophized, and Huang began to devour all things Chan.

The weathered Grosset & Dunlap editions sent him off to the video store in search of the films that had made Charlie Chan perhaps the most famous Asian face in America in the first half of the 20th century — and a detested symbol of Hollywood’s racial sins in the second. But for Huang, the fact that Charlie Chan was shorthand for Orientalist stereotypes and for yellow-face cinema, at a time when roles for Asian actors went to masquerading whites, did nothing to dim his fascination. “Having grown up in China where I have met thousands of Chans,” he writes in his new book, *Charlie Chan: The Untold Story of the Honorable Detective and His
Rendezvous With American History (Norton), “I find him to be the strangest and most impressive Chan ever.”

Published a little over a decade after Huang’s serendipitous discovery, the book is a record of his own detective work to unearth the story of Chan, a search for the roots of a fictional character. It led him to archives across the Midwest and to old police files in Hawaii, where he mined a trove of information about Chang Apana, the Chinese cop on whom Biggers based Chan. But it also plunged him deeply into the history of the Chinese in America, from the Gold Rush and railroad-construction days of the mid-1850s, when thousands of Chinese were welcomed on the West Coast as dirt-cheap labor, and then to a few decades later, when onerous federal restrictions were enacted to prevent any more of them from entering the country, and outbreaks of mob violence in Los Angeles, Denver, and elsewhere met those already here. Not surprisingly, popular and literary culture responded with its own images, and a new creature, the China-man — equal parts exotica and racist bile — was born. Decades before Chan, Chang and Eng Bunker — aka the Siamese Twins — were nationally known curiosities; so was “The Heathen Chinee,” Bret Harte’s 1870 poem, a product of his attempt to ventriloquize the anti-Asian sentiments among miners.

Whatever the 19th-century antecedents, with the birth of the motion-picture industry, the image of the Chinese took on a wholly other dimension. Early Hollywood was under the spell of a particular strain of home-grown Orientalism (the 2,258-seat, $2-million Grauman’s Chinese Theatre opened its doors the same year, 1927, that The Jazz Singer ushered in the talkie), and Charlie Chan movies were box-office boffo. It’s startling, reading Huang’s book, to realize just how deep the appetite was among moviegoers for anything with Chan in it. At one point during the Depression, Fox was making three Chan movies a year, at a cost of about $250,000 a film; they grossed nearly a million each. Some 47 Charlie Chan movies were made before the closing credits ran on The Sky Dragon, in 1949, starring Roland Winters, the fifth actor to play the aphorism-happy detective — and not a single one of them was actually Chinese.

Before Winters, Chan had been the signature role of the one-time playwright Sidney Toler, but it was Toler’s predecessor, the Swedish actor Warner Oland, who made the detective a cinematic cash machine before his death, in 1938. With Oland — a master of yellow-face who earlier portrayed the sinister Dr. Fu Manchu, the only fake-Asian rival to Chan’s silver-screen supremacy — the detective was sent globetrotting to mysterious and chichi places (there was Charlie Chan in Paris, Charlie Chan in Egypt, Charlie Chan at Monte Carlo, even a 1935 installment in Shanghai, about 750 miles from where Chan’s Cantonese forebears would have lived). Like the Marx Brothers, he rubbed shoulders with the hoity-toity set in Charlie Chan at the Opera, Charlie Chan at the Race-track, and Charlie Chan on Broadway. One movie, Charlie Chan at the Olympics, even had him fly on the Hindenburg to the 1936 Games, in Berlin, on the trail of spies possessing a device to control aircraft via remote control. Audiences lapped it up.

Reich-era Germany was a long way from Warren, Ohio, where Biggers, the Harvard graduate who created the supersleuth in his 1925 novel The House Without a Key, was born in 1884; and even farther from Honolulu, where Chang Apana, the son of a Chinese immigrant to Hawaii whose daredevil police work caught Biggers’s eye, was born around 1871. In fact, the only Canton that Biggers really knew was in Ohio, not China. Apana himself moved briefly with his father back to small-village China as a child, but he spent the rest of his five decades in Hawaii, joining the ranks of law enforcement in 1898, the same year the islands were annexed by the United States. So perhaps the most famous Chinese figure known to Americans at the time had only the most tenuous of connections to China. “Brahmin Boston is where the chop suey of Charlie Chan was first stir-fried by the Harvard-educated
but the inauthenticity, the cultural mélange and goofy linguistic ventriloquism of this fake Chinaman, Orientalist warts and all, captivated rather than repelled Huang. “For me, a real Chinaman, who didn’t grow up in this country but hasn’t been shielded from the arrows of American racism, it is fascinating that Charlie Chan is an American original, ‘Made in the U.S.A.’” Part of what makes Charlie Chan: The Untold Story more than an entertaining study of race, immigration, and popular culture in America is that for Huang, the appeal is highly personal. It’s his own private Making of Americans, written with a wicked streak of parodic humor and self-deprecation. As he searches for Chan, the fictional sleuth becomes an oblique mirror for Huang, a way for him to recognize in inverted form his own journey to America (the restaurant, which he’s no longer involved with, has become a hotspot for locals), but he wrestled with the unfinished memoir, “Yellow Alabama.” He’d hoped to capture the three difficult years he spent in Tuscaloosa in Northport, just over the Black Warrior River from Tuscaloosa, making soup and fried rice every morning and mopping the floors at night. But the takeout business didn’t do much to improve his sense of social isolation. “I felt like I was sinking deep into what Allen Ginsberg in Howl calls the ‘animal soup of time,’” he writes in an unfinished memoir, “Yellow Alabama.” He’d hoped to capture the three difficult years he spent in Tuscaloosa (the restaurant, which he’s no longer involved with, has become a hotspot for locals), but he wrestled with the writing. The breakthrough came when he finally realized that the best way to write about his American life was “by thinking his life through that of the iconic Chinaman in America — Charlie Chan.”

Eric Banks, a former editor of Bookforum, is a writer in New York. A slightly longer version of this article appeared in The Chronicle Review, published by The Chronicle of Higher Education. It is reprinted here by special permission of the author.
Looking Way Ahead: Regents Approve Long Range Plan

CAREFULLY AND COLLABORATIVELY, OUR CASH-STRAPPED CAMPUS NURTURES ITS VISION FOR THE FUTURE

The Board of Regents unanimously adopted UC Santa Barbara’s Long Range Development Plan, a comprehensive land-use document that will guide campus planning through 2025. The LRDP now goes to the California Coastal Commission for final approval.

So why, you ask, does the campus need a plan for development when the budget challenges facing the state and the UC system make any growth at this time highly unlikely?

Good question, and Chancellor Henry Yang has answers. “It was extremely important for us to consider our future as one of the country’s leading research universities, and to identify our resources, needs, and aspirations,” he says. “Our campus’s LRDP is not so much a master plan for growth as it is a blueprint for the future development of our campus. We regard it as an essential planning tool that makes it possible for our campus to carry out its important mission of teaching, research, and public service.”

What’s more, all UC campuses are required to have a new long-range plan every 15 years. The UCSB plan, called Vision 2025, is the product of a process that included the preparation of a strategic academic plan as well as sustainability and housing plans, and a plan for what is called the “built campus.”

The LRDP calls for incremental enrollment growth to 25,000 students by 2025 (from about 21,000 today). But Executive Vice Chancellor Gene Lucas, who helped lead the LRDP effort, acknowledges the current reality. “Once the LRDP is approved, any growth will depend on budget climate and enrollment pressures,” he says. “Right now we are actually in a contraction mode, trying to get our enrollments down to a level concomitant with state funding. We do not expect to be back to our current levels of enrollment (and thus faculty and staff size) for a number of years.”

Marc Fisher, senior associate vice chancellor for administrative services and UCSB’s chief architect, says the LRDP strengthens the campus’s commitment to ideals such as the preservation of large areas of campus land for habitat restoration and for passive and active recreation. “New building sites and associated building densities are designed to limit impact on the coast, optimize our precious land resource, and enhance existing and proposed open spaces,” he says.

The Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors and the Goleta City Council both supported the plan. The campus is now working with local groups, particularly Sustainable University Now, to ensure that the final plan addresses the concerns and priorities of the community as well as those of the campus.

Information about the plan is on the Web at http://lrdp.id.ucsb.edu

An architectural rendering of a view across the campus as it might appear in 2025.

The Pardall corridor as envisioned in the campus’s plan.
The Sedgwick Reserve’s Tipton Meeting House was dedicated in March.

Donor-Funded Tipton House Wins Green Building Status

The Tipton Meeting House at the university’s Sedgwick Natural Reserve has been designated one of the “greenest” buildings in the nation, earning LEED Platinum certification — the highest sustainability rating possible — from the U.S. Green Building Council. (The acronym stands for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design.)

The Tipton Meeting House was funded by gifts from the Tipton Foundation of Santa Ynez and a bequest from UCSB alumnus Marvin Clarke.

The newly constructed visitor and education center is one of only four buildings in the UC system to have earned this distinction.

For the first time, Sedgwick has a central gathering place for its nearly 4,800 annual visitors, with indoor and outdoor classrooms for workshops, meetings, remote telescope presentations, and K-12 outreach activities. The single-story, 3,000-square-foot building also houses the reserve’s administrative offices.

“Our campus is deeply grateful to our wonderful friends in the community, especially the Tipton Foundation, and to all of the building professionals who were involved in the planning and construction efforts, for their vision for the Tipton Meeting House at Sedgwick Reserve,” said Chancellor Henry Yang at the building’s dedication.

The center was established in 2005 with a generous gift from SAGE, an international publisher of academic journals and textbooks. Sara Miller McCune, founder, publisher, and chairman of the company, is a generous campus benefactor.

The new gifts include $1.26 million to establish a postdoctoral fellowship program that will bring exceptional recent Ph.D. recipients to campus to teach and conduct research, and $1.45 million for the center’s distinguished visiting scholar program and lecture series. It will enable the SAGE Center to bring leading researchers to campus for extended periods to explore the multidimensional nature of the human mind and participate in educational seminars, workshops, and public lectures focusing on issues in neuroscience.

“We are extremely pleased to continue our interdisciplinary work, bringing the study of the brain and the mind into contact with a wide variety of other academic fields and cultural experiences,” said Michael Gazzaniga, a professor of psychology and director of the SAGE Center.

Benefactions

- The Department of Music has received a $550,000 endowment gift to establish a graduate fellowship in ethnomusicology and a scholarship in Scandinavian music. The bequest was from the late Ardis Higgins, an Honorary Alumna. Throughout her life, Higgins was devoted to music education, both on campus and in the Santa Barbara community. “This wonderful gift will enable the department to support an additional graduate student in ethnomusicology, a growing area of academic interest, with enough funding to provide a stipend and cover rising UC fees,” said Paul Berkowitz, chair of music. “Scandinavian music relates to Ardis’s heritage. The scholarship will provide financial assistance for a student majoring in musicology or performance.”

- Higgins served as president of the UCSB General Affiliates and the Music Affiliates, and was a trustee of the UC Santa Barbara Foundation.

- Astrophysicist Lars Bildsten, a permanent member of the Kavli Institute for Theoretical Physics, has been awarded the Wayne Rosing, Simon and Diana Raab Chair in Theoretical Astrophysics in recognition of his pioneering contributions to the discipline. The endowed chair was established with a combined $1 million gift from the donors. As a result, the Kavli Foundation expanded its endowment support for the world-renowned physics research center with a $1 million matching contribution.

- Nobel Prize winner David Gross, director of the KITP, said, “This marvelous gift from our friends in the community is greatly appreciated. . . I am especially pleased that the first occupant of this endowed chair is Lars Bildsten, not just because of his path-breaking research and eminence in the field of astrophysics, but also because of the essential leadership he has provided at KITP and UCSB.”

- UC Santa Barbara has received a $500,000 gift from campus benefactor Sara Miller McCune to establish an endowment that will provide ongoing support for the student intern and public service program at the Walter H. Capps Center for the Study of Ethics, Religion, and Public Life. In recognition of her gift, the program will be named in McCune’s honor.

responded during 2009-2010 with overwhelming generosity, contributing $44.5 million for scholarships, teaching, research, and academic programs, an increase of nearly $4 million over the previous year.

Thus far, the multi-year Campaign for UC Santa Barbara has generated more than $610 million for priority projects and initiatives.

“UCSB is gratified by the responding generosity and the shared vision of our dedicated alumni and friends, particularly in these challenging times,” said Chancellor Henry T. Yang. “Their extraordinary commitment and support for the university will provide much-needed financial support for students, teaching, and research, and help ensure that UCSB does not compromise its commitment to innovation, access, and excellence.”

Last year the campus received 18,023 gifts — that’s a record. To help students with the rising cost of a UC education, donations for scholarships and fellowships increased by nearly 50 percent to more than $5 million.

SAGE Publications Gives Center $2.7 Million More

The SAGE Center for the Study of the Mind at UC Santa Barbara has received an additional $2.7 million in two gifts from SAGE Publications, Inc., of Thousand Oaks.

CAMPAIGN LITERATURE: A new phase of The Campaign for UC Santa Barbara is planned, and a booklet articulating themes of the drive has been published by the Office of Development and the UC Santa Barbara Foundation. For information, contact campaign@ucsb.edu

B CAMPAIGN TRAIL

Campus Received Record Number of Gifts Last Year

As UC Santa Barbara grappled with huge reductions in state funding, alumni, parents, and friends
Blowout: In the Schools
In March 1968, thousands of Chicano students walked out of their East Los Angeles high schools to protest decades of inferior or discriminatory education in their so-called “Mexican Schools.” During these historic walkouts — or “blowouts,” as they were known — the students were led by Sal Castro, a Mexican-American teacher who encouraged them to make their grievances public after school administrators and school board members failed to listen to them.

Blowout! Sal Castro and the Chicano Struggle for Educational Justice (University of North Carolina Press), a new book by Mario T. Garcia, a professor of Chicana and Chicano Studies and of history, tells the story of the walkouts, which effectively shut down all East Los Angeles high schools for the better part of a week. It also tells of the man who inspired the students to resolve their issues through a nonviolent demonstration.

“He inspired the students,” Garcia says of Castro. “When they saw that their teacher was willing to put his career on the line, that gave them a lot of courage.”

As a faculty member first at Belmont High School and then at Lincoln High School, Castro became aware of the high dropout rates among Chicano and Latino students, as well as a lack of sensitivity on the part of top administrators to the students’ language and cultural backgrounds. He also saw their low reading scores, and a tracking system that directed them toward vocational jobs rather than higher education.

“He began to realize that only a dramatic action was going to shake up the school system,” Garcia says. “Even before 1968, some of the students at Lincoln had approached the school board and district administration about some of the problems, but no one would listen. That thoroughly convinced Sal that dramatic action was necessary.”

Faux Eskimo
From the late 1880’s to the early 1900’s, Olaf Krar er regaled listeners with incredible stories about her native Greenland and her Eskimo heritage. She crisscrossed United States, giving lectures and making presentations — more than 2,500 in all. There was a catch, however: K rarer was not an Eskimo, and she had never set foot in Greenland. She was, in fact, a dwarf from Iceland who had immigrated to the United States at age 18. Unable to find employment outside of circus sideshows, she reinvented herself as the Eskimo people assumed her to be.

Eventually, she changed her country of origin to Greenland — there were no Eskimos in Iceland! — and took to the lecture circuit. But nearly everything she said to the thousands

able to fool so many people, including experts of the day.

America, says Björnsdóttir, “was — and perhaps still is — the place where immigrants could most easily reinvent themselves and lead a life that would have been impossible in their native countries. At the same time, Americans were very ignorant about life and cultures in foreign lands, and harbored great prejudice against minorities and foreigners, a fact that Olóf certainly used to her advantage.”

Blowout: In the Gulf
On April 22, 2010 — Earth Day — the gigantic drilling rig Deepwater Horizon sank in the Gulf of Mexico, some 40 miles off the Louisiana coast. The rig went down two days after an explosion took the lives of 11 crewmembers, starting the worst offshore oil disaster in history.

In Blowout in the Gulf — The BP Oil Spill Disaster and the Future of Energy in America (MIT Press), the late William Freudenburg, the Dehlsen Professor of Environmental Studies at UC Santa Barbara who died in December, and Robert Gramling, professor of sociology at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, examine the disaster itself, as well as the decisions and policies that led up to it.

The book also takes a look at factors that made the Deepwater Horizon explosion and subsequent oil spill a disaster waiting to happen. “It has to do with an atrophy of vigilance,” said Freudenburg when the book was published. “When things go according to plan time after time, we stop paying attention to the risks involved.

We’ve had several years of safe operations in relatively shallow drilling offshore in U.S. waters. Each time a well goes in safely, there’s a temptation to cut corners — as BP did. Do it often enough, though, and eventually there’s going to be a disaster.”

Footnotes

● When the euro was established as Europe’s joint money 12 years ago, many predicted it would soon achieve parity with the U.S. dollar — and possibly surpass it — as an international currency. In reality, however, the euro has remained firmly entrenched in the dollar’s shadow. In his new book, The Future of Global Currency — The Euro Versus the Dollar (Routledge), Benjamin J. Cohen, the Louis Lancaster Professor of International Political Economy, examines the core deficiencies in the structure of the euro that make it virtually impossible for it to be anything other than a regional currency — dominant within Europe, but not elsewhere.

● In her book, Right Star Rising — A New Politics, 1974-1980 (W.W. Norton & Co.), Laura Kalman, a professor of history, suggests that today’s conservative movement is rooted in the 1970’s, and is a product not just of the convergence of different varieties of conservatism, but of the ineffectual presidencies of Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter. According to Kalman, the weaknesses of both men as commanders-in-chief and party leaders, and the growth of conservatism, led to the election of Ronald Reagan in 1980. Kalman says she wanted to explore “how the rise of conservatism was related to problems of presidential leadership — or lack thereof — during the 1970’s.”

● In Another Part of a Long Story — Literary Traces of Eugene O’Neill & Agnes Boulton (University of Michigan Press), William Davies King, a professor of theater, examines the dynamics of the couple’s literary marriage and retrieves Boulton and her work from the dark recesses of literary history. “She is reflective of an early generation of professional women writers,” says King. “The 20th century saw the emergence of this new profile of a woman who puts a literary career over other things, and she was an example of that.”

— Andrea Estrada
THINKING OUT LOUD

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Pitcher Perfect

People often view Santa Barbara as paradise, the California dream—palm-framed vistas, glistening surf, the golden Santa Ynez Mountains, beauty as stunning and transcendent as a rainbow.

“Almost everyone who has been to Santa Barbara understands that there’s something special about it—the quality of light, the Mediterranean climate, the biodiversity, the lifestyle,” says artist Hank Pitcher, who is also a teacher and a surfer. His iconic portraits of surfboards, today’s tribal shields, symbolize California beach culture.

For nearly 40 years, Pitcher has captured Santa Barbara’s subtle and complex sense of place in his poetic paintings of its magnificent, unspoiled open spaces. His work together with that of other local plein air painters has inspired the preservation of the landscape.

“I’ve had this incredibly privileged experience,” says Pitcher, a faculty member in the College of Creative Studies. “I’ve lived almost my entire life within about a half-mile radius—growing up in Isla Vista, graduating from the college, and teaching at UCSB. Unintentionally, my paintings have become historical documents.”

Although Isla Vista’s lemon groves and pastures have been replaced by apartments, the dunes on Coal Oil Point have been restored by the campus, along with other locations where Pitcher teaches with botanists and biologists.

“At most universities you can’t paint and learn about the natural world,” he says. “There is something worthwhile about going out and standing in the weather to really look at something. The Greeks have a word for it that means wisdom of the flesh. You learn by being there.”

“Forbidden,” his upcoming exhibition at Sullivan Goss downtown, opens June 2. It will focus on places in Santa Barbara that are off-limits for reasons real and imagined, including the mysterious Clark Estate, the Coral Casino, and working cattle ranches.

What is the test of a good painting? “You have to live with a painting, and if the painting, like a poem and like a song, has some sort of integrity, it gets better over time,” says Pitcher. “It becomes more instead of less.”

—Eileen Conrad