



I W C Newsletter

Concord House, 1407 Chapala St., Santa Barbara, CA 93101
www.worldculture.org



“Action from principle, the perception and the performance of right, changes things and relations; it is essentially revolutionary, and does not consist wholly with anything which was.” — Thoreau

Stones into Schools

Greg Mortenson, author of *Three Cups of Tea* and the recently released *Stones into Schools*, has been successful in showing the world a great truth – that service must be based on love and gratitude, and that love involves suffering and sacrifice, great patience and listening to the people one wants to serve. Action on behalf of those who have the least is not just a kindness but a principle of action that radiates throughout society. Greg Mortenson’s actions on behalf of the least and the lowest in the remotest part of Afghanistan and Pakistan, places forgotten even by their own countries, have stimulated the imagination and admiration of the world. They have shown, as Thoreau pointed out, that acting from universal principles of right is at the core of true change in the world.

The spirit of courageous commitment shines forth in *Stones into Schools* as Greg Mortenson shares his account of the journey to bring schools to the farthest reaches of Afghanistan, the Wakhan Corridor, part of the old Silk Road. Mortenson’s first book, *Three Cups of Tea*, tells the story of Greg’s trek to K2 in honor of his sister, Christa, who died of epilepsy. His ascent stopped short of the peak, and on his way down, he became lost on the Boltoro Glacier in Pakistan. He wandered, exhausted and dehydrated, into Korphe, and was taken in by Haji Ali, the village chief who became his mentor. As he regained his health, he found eighty-two children sitting outside, writing in the dirt with sticks, without a teacher. One of the girls, Chocho, asked Greg to promise that he would return to her village to build a school. He gave his word of honor, and the book recounts his undaunted efforts to raise funds, overcome innumerable obstacles and bring materials to Korphe so the children could have a school. This was the beginning of a journey that has led to the creation of 131 schools in Afghanistan and Pakistan, educating over 58,000 students.

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Theme for 2010: Pioneers of World Culture

Aim 3. To honour through appropriate observance the contributions of men and women of all ages to world culture — Declaration of Interdependence

UPCOMING EVENTS



African Leadership: Vision and Challenges

**Forum: Saturday, March 13
4:00 - 6:00 p.m.**

**Concord House, 1407 Chapala St.
Santa Barbara**

**Speakers: Patience Ncube,
Milochka Tshibingu and
Rose Mwangi**

A panel of SBCC international students, Patience Ncube (Zimbabwe), Milochka Tshibingu (So. Africa), and Rose Mwangi (Kenya) discuss their visions of leadership and the challenges facing their countries to increase human rights and create a more democratic and just future for their citizens. The story of Nelson Mandela in South Africa highlights the challenges of moving away from apartheid. Hear the stories of Kenyan leaders, Wangari Maathai, 2004 Nobel Peace Prize recipient for her conservation work, and Martha Karua, Minister of Justice, human rights advocates. The far-reaching and cascading effects of illiteracy in Kenya will be discussed. Learn how the legacy of colonialism in Zimbabwe affects factors such as traditional and modern values, educational opportunities, stigma and rights related to poverty, HIV/AIDS, gender equity, and employment.

For information: (805) 963-6007



LACMA Exhibit: Renoir in the 20th Century

Expedition to Los Angeles County

Museum of Art:

**Saturday, March 27th
9:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.**

**Concord House, 1407 Chapala St.
Santa Barbara**

Coordinator: Carolyn Dorrance

Join members and friends of the Institute in a trip to LACMA to experience an "unprecedented look" at the paintings made by the French painter Renoir after his break with impressionism. This first comprehensive retrospective since 1985 of Renoir's late works is said to document his movement into modernism and help the viewer bridge the perceptual divide between 19th and 20th century art.

Tickets are \$22 and includes complete access to the regular collections. Since tickets must be purchased for a specific time and group rates may be available, **please notify Carolyn Dorrance (967-1055) no later than Friday March 12th, 9 a.m.** Sooner is better since carpooling space is limited.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Stones Into Schools

**Book Circle:
Saturday, March 20th
4:00 p.m.
Concord House,
1407 Chapala St.
Santa Barbara**

You are welcome to join the IWC's study of Greg Mortenson's new book, *Stones Into Schools*, in which he describes his efforts to bring education to a country beset by war and poverty.

The next meeting of the discussion group is Saturday, March 20th at 4:00 pm in Concord House, 1407 Chapala St., Santa Barbara.

Discussion will focus upon Chapters 7 - 11 in Part II of the book. Participants are encouraged to read it, but all are welcome to join the circle. Copies of the book are easily purchased locally and online.

Contact Carolyn Dorrance at 967-1055, or email inquiries to carolyn@worldculture.org.

In March**Anniversaries**

- 3rd Georg Cantor, German mathematician b. 1845
- 3rd Alexander Graham Bell, Scottish scientist, inventor b. 1847
- 4th Antonio Vivaldi, Italian composer, priest, violinist b. 1678
- 6th Michelangelo Buonarroti, Italian painter, sculptor b. 1475
- 6th Elizabeth Barrett Browning, English poet b. 1806
- 7th Piet Mondrian, Dutch painter b. 1872
- 7th Maurice Ravel, French composer b. 1875
- 8th Oliver Wendell Holmes, American jurist, U.S. Supreme Court Justice b. 1841
- 12th George Berkeley, Irish philosopher, metaphysician b. 1685
- 14th Johann Strauss, Austrian composer b. 1804
- 14th Albert Einstein, German-born theoretical physicist b. 1879
- 15th Julius Caesar, Roman political leader d. 44 B.C.E.
- 18th Stéphane Mallarmé, French poet, critic b. 1842
- 18th Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, Russian composer b. 1844
- 19th David Livingstone, Scottish explorer, medical missionary b. 1813
- 20th Ovid (Publius Ovidius Naso), Roman poet b. 43 B.C.E.
- 20th Henrik Ibsen, Norwegian playwright b. 1828
- 21st Johann Sebastian Bach, German composer, organist b. 1685
- 23rd Pierre-Simon, marquis de Laplace, French astronomer, mathematician b. 1749
- 24th William Morris, English designer, artist, b. 1834
- 26th Edward Bellamy, American author b. 1850
- 26th Robert Frost, American poet b. 1874
- 27th Wilhelm Konrad Roentgen, German physicist b. 1845
- 28th Teresa of Avila, Spanish mystic, Carmelite nun b. 1515
- 30th Maimonides (Moses ben Maimon), Spanish rabbi, physician, philosopher b. 1135
- 30th Francisco de Goya, Spanish painter, printmaker b. 1746
- 30th Vincent van Gogh, Dutch Post-Impressionist artist b. 1853
- 31st René Descartes, French philosopher, mathematician b. 1596
- 31st Joseph Haydn, Austrian composer b. 1732
- 31st César Chávez, Mexican-American farm worker, labor leader, civil rights activist b. 1927

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Stones into Schools

In general, the Taliban prohibit girls from obtaining an education, so special emphasis has been placed on creating schools with large populations of female students. Literacy is a fundamental human right that when denied, causes cascading effects in terms of maternal and infant mortality, and socioeconomic growth, as shown by the World Bank studies. Women who are educated are more likely to ensure their children are educated.

Greg's heartfelt approach to bringing opportunities for education to the people in Afghanistan is remarkable psychologically and politically. Honoring the dignity of each person, Greg forges relationships with village elders, and respects the values of the community. He says that he learned early on that he had to throw away his agenda. It takes time to have three cups of tea. He recognizes that he needs to build relationships that will sustain the environment in which children can have a chance to learn. Greg writes, "When you take the time to actually listen, with humility, to what people have to say, it's amazing what you can learn. Especially if the people who are doing the talking also happen to be children."

The people donate the land for their school and do the construction, while the Central Asian Institute (CAI) which Greg directs, provides the funding for the materials and pays the salary of the teachers and supplies. His grassroots efforts put the initiative in the hands of the villagers, and they identify with the school as their own.

Khaled Hosseini, author of *The Kite*

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In March

Observances and Acknowledgements

- 1st (2010) Holi, Hindu Festival of Colors, celebrates the beginning of spring
- 8th International Women's Day sponsored by the U.N. honors the social achievements of women
- 8th (2010) Commonwealth Day celebrating the Commonwealth of Nations
- 10th Tibetan uprising against Chinese occupation of Tibet began in 1959
- 16th (2010) Gudhi Padwa, Hindu festival celebrating the new year and the arrival of spring in the Marathi culture of northern India, one of a number of such celebrations held throughout the Hindu world on different days and months
- 20th (2010) Vernal Equinox (17:32 UTC: 1:32 p.m. EDT)
- 20th/21st (2010) Nowruz, ancient Persian festival marking the new year
- 24th (2010) Ram Navami commemorates the birth of the Hindu deity Rama, celebrated throughout India on and around the 24th
- 28th (2010) Palm Sunday marks the beginning of Christian Holy Week and the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem
- 28th/29th (2010) Mahavir Jayanti celebrated to honor the birth of Lord Mahavir, founder of the Jain religion
- 29th/30th (2010) Pesach or Jewish Passover celebration begins

Save the Date:

Songs of a Brave New World

**Pico Iyer will be interviewed
by Marc Cooper,
contemporary journalist,
on Saturday, May 8th, 7:30 p.m.
at Victoria Hall Theatre,
33 West Victoria Street,
Santa Barbara, CA 93101.**

**Information about tickets will be
available in the April newsletter.**

Stones into Schools

Runner and *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, well describes Greg's philosophy in the Foreword, "The conflict in Afghanistan will ultimately not be won with guns and airstrikes, but with books, notebooks, pencils, tools of socioeconomic wellbeing." The changing face of the military is represented by Col. Kolendra who believes in the absolute importance of non-extremist education to bring stability to Afghanistan. Greg has heard from many veterans of the Afghanistan war that moderate education is the best way to combat Islamic extremism.

Contrasting sharply with the immense beauty of the pristine peaks of the Neelum Valley is the darkness of attitudes toward women. One young girl, Siddre, who was finishing the twelfth grade, wanted to become a doctor and return to Bhedi to help her community. Her father appealed to CAI for a scholarship. When the CAI staff visited her home, it became clear that all the females in the family were totally enthusiastic about Siddre going to college, while her brother-in-law strongly objected. He felt that the money should not

be given to a girl, and that the true value of the scholarship could only be realized if he received the money. Siddre's father allowed the brother-in-law's objections to stop her from getting the scholarship.

Mountain climbing teaches courage, stamina, respect for nature, and vision; climbers endure physical and emotional hardship. Greg brings these qualities to his work to serve Afghans, as well as humility and a willingness to learn from others. He exemplifies an integrity that values as supremely important keeping his word to a young girl. His sacrificial efforts, along with those of his band of comrades, have brought a light to shine in the lives of many young girls in Afghanistan that surely will be passed on to many others in the future.

Join the IWC Book Circle that is discussing *Stones into Schools* on Saturday, March 20th at 4:00 pm at Concord House.

Greg Mortenson's website notes that he will be speaking through UCSB Arts and Lectures on Tuesday, May 4th, 2010.

Donna Moore & Gerry Lewin



INSTITUTE OF WORLD CULTURE

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PRISM Online Community Calendar

PRISM lists member-recommended community events of interest on the IWC website. Please e-mail suggestions to donna@worldculture.org.

Newsletter
Contact
gerry@worldculture.org
about newsletter-related
issues and ideas.