



# Institute of World Culture

## IWC July 2008 Newsletter

*"Our defense is in the preservation of the spirit [of truth] which prizes liberty as the heritage of all humanity, in all lands everywhere. Destroy this spirit, and you have planted the seeds of despotism around your own doors."*

*Abraham Lincoln*

## A Community of Truth

Every since the founding of the United States, Americans have been described as 'cosmic optimists.' As the new nation began to ponder the meaning of the Declaration of Independence, slowly recognizing it as the 'charter of the American Dream,' the revolutionary implications of July 4, 1776, have taken root within the world's collective consciousness. This justification of the American Revolution provided a set of measures by which people on all continents might not only assess their own march towards modernity, but even critically judge the very nation that first proclaimed them --and continues to do so -- as universal standards.

What was 'new' was the very thought that the world could be created anew. Until this time, the popular idea of progress was actually regress—all good things had happened in the past. Before the eighteenth century people routinely accepted that to be happy they must travel back in time and recreate a lost 'golden age.' After 1776, most Americans became convinced that membership in a community' was not an 'involuntary inheritance,' but rather an 'explicit allegiance.' Thoreau, as usual, put it best when he insisted that American identity be based on an 'imagined destiny,' a 'natural' power shared by all people to transform their social, political and individual lives. American reliance on this power, both conscious and unconscious, implanted agency, experimentation, and creativity into the very heart of American character.  
*(Essay continued below\*)*

## COMING EVENTS



***32nd Institute of World Culture Founding Day Lecture  
New Paradigms for a Sustainable Life on  
Earth:  
Linking Biology and Religion with Interspirituality  
Saturday, July 5, 2008, 7:30 pm***

## Concord House, 1407 Chapala St, Santa Barbara

### Speaker: Ed Bastian

Explore the connection between spirituality and the environment and how human spirituality is a force for sustainability. How has the positive emergence of biodiversity and interspirituality provided a ground for new paradigms for saving life on Earth?

There will be a brief presentation and lively discussion on a number of themes, including interconnecting movements in biology and religion, such as the following:

- In biology, the movement from systematics to ecology to biodiversity
- In religion, the movement is from secular, to ecumenical, to interfaith, to interspiritual
- Interspirituality as a hopeful new paradigm for human-nature flourishing

Ed Bastian holds a Ph.D. in Buddhist Studies and Western Philosophy from the University of Wisconsin. He directed the first biodiversity program at the Smithsonian, produced a series of films for the BBC and PBS, and has founded several non-profits including Spiritual Paths Institute, and is working with Santa Barbara faith communities to build ECOFaith Santa Barbara.

For information: 805/967-7023

## July 2008 IWC Film Series

3 Saturday Nights in July at 7:00 pm

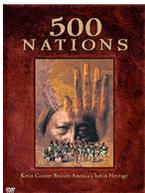
Concord House, 1407 Chapala Street

Chair: Robert Moore



### July 12 Orlando (1992)

Director Sally Potter adapts Virginia Woolf's 1928 allegorical novel about a woman, Orlando, who lives for 400 years. Commanded never to age by Queen Elizabeth, the title character becomes immortal; we then follow Orlando through 400 years of dreamlike British history. Midway through the film, Orlando changes genders. (1992)



### July 19 500 Nations, Episodes 1 & 2 (1995)

*500 Nations* utilizes historical texts, eyewitness accounts, pictorial sources and computer graphic reconstructions to explore the magnificent civilizations which flourished prior to contact with Western civilization, and to tell the dramatic and tragic story of the Native American nations' desperate attempts to retain their way of life against overwhelming odds. Episode 1: The Splendor of the Anasazi and Maya.

Episode 2: Teotihuacan, Aztecs, Motecuhzoma & Cortez.



### July 26 A Man for all Seasons (1966)

Winner of six academy awards, the movie depicts the historical standoff between Sir Thomas More (Oscar winner Paul Scofield) and King Henry VIII (Robert Shaw) concerning the King's recent divorce and new marriage. A dramatic portrayal of how a rational human being can remain true to his principles in the face of seemingly overwhelming

adversity.

## **Study Group: Poetry and Vision**

**8:00 pm, Concord House, 1407 Chapala St., Santa Barbara**  
**Meetings are on the second and fourth Thursday of each month.**

### **July 10th and 24th**

Join in the continued exploration of excerpts from essays in Robert Henri's *The Art Spirit* (1923).

Also viewing slides of his work, and other painters in his circle.

Contact Joe Miller at [joe@worldculture.org](mailto:joe@worldculture.org) for more information,

or check the website: [http://www.worldculture.org/pages/5\\_currentstudygroup.html](http://www.worldculture.org/pages/5_currentstudygroup.html)

### **A Community of Truth** *(continued from above):*

Implicit in this vision is a radically unfamiliar understanding of the meaning of 'rights.'

The immigrants to the 'New' World' had left their home countries because the social systems under which they lived seemed more like prisons than communities. They didn't see individual freedom as disassociated from communal responsibilities. Exercising a right and performing a duty were two sides of the same coin. This older language of rights and duties was made revolutionary in the Declaration of Independence through an appeal to 'nature,' the eighteenth century's word for 'reality.' American optimism could not be based upon lies, commonly called "crimes against reality."

In 1776, assertions of freedom and claims of equality were dependent on this shared commitment to the pursuit of truth. The Founders called this collective search 'science,' a term many Enlightenment political and social thinkers used interchangeably with 'natural religion.' Both ways of thinking revealed avenues to human happiness. Public policy might be required to rest upon publicly demonstrable truths, but in the interest of truth, individual explorations into the mystery of the universe may not be repressed. Our Founders realized that science itself progressed through daring demonstrations of genius, far beyond the capacity of ordinary people to properly assess. But unless these insights could be framed through convincing appeals to common sense and experience, their applications to law and policy could not secure the consent of the governed.

Basing a system of fundamental rights and responsibilities on the clarity of reason and acceptance of its findings is the most ambitious part of the American Dream. We should not be surprised that today's leadership, public and private, has decided it is easier to govern through the fog of deceit. Truth is replaced by opinion and all opinions are equal. The only criterion for determining if a certain opinion will prevail is the political power of those promoting it. In response people throughout the United States have been engaged (since 1976 according to one recent book) in a 'Great Sorting.' They are creating tens of thousands of like-minded communities through physical migrations to towns and neighborhoods, or, when moving is not an option, virtual networks through technical means. These new communities may not be the final form in which the search for truth is reestablished as the basis for law and policy, but the message is obvious. Localization, intimacy and direct person-to person contact is the first requirement of

testing the truth of what we are told. Educations crafted to the needs of the individual and enlightened decision-making are inextricably intertwined. The American Revolution continues, awaiting a new interpretation of the American Dream.

Philip Grant, Ph.D.  
Founder, Institute of Reverential Ecology

## In July

### Anniversaries

1st	Wilhelm von Leibniz 1646
2nd	Hermann Hesse 1877
3rd	Franz Kafka 1883
4th	Nathaniel Hawthorne 1804
6th	John Huss d. 1415 Tenzin Gyatso, XIVth Dalai Lama 1935
8th	Jean de La Fontaine 1621
9th	Peter Paul Rubens 1577
10th	Sir William Blackstone 1723
11th	John Quincy Adams 1767
12th	Henry David Thoreau 1817
13th	Julius Caesar 100 B.C.E.
14th	Isaac Bashevis Singer 1904
15th	Rembrandt van Rijn 1606 Thomas Bulfinch 1796
18th	Robert Hooke 1635 Nelson Mandela 1918
19th	Edgar Degas 1834
20th	Petrarch 1304
22nd	Gregor Mendel 1822
24th	Pythagoras c. 582 B.C.E. Simon Bolivar 1783
25th	Thomas a Kempis d. 1471
26th	George Bernard Shaw 1856 Carl Jung 1875 Aldous Huxley 1894
28th	Jean Baptiste Corot 1796
29th	Dag Hammarskjold 1905

### Observances

#### July

4th	Independence Day Declaration of Independence 1776 Declaration of Interdependence 1976
8th	Discovery of radio astronomy (Jansky) 1933
11th	Fundamental theorem of the calculus (Leibniz) 1677
12th	Foundation of quantum mechanics (Heisenberg) 1925
14th	Storming of the Bastille 1789
15th	Inquisition ended (Spain) 1834
16th	First world atlas published 1482 First atomic bomb 1945
17th	First photograph of a star 1850
18th	Guru Purnima (Hindu)
20th	First earthlings on moon 1969
21st	Discovery of the electromagnet 1820
22nd	Landing of space vehicle on Mars (Russia) 1972

23rd First Olympic Games 776 B.C.E.  
29th First Almanac published 1492  
30th Society of Freemasons (Boston) 1733  
Insulin discovered 1921

## Information about the Institute of World Culture

### Website

Please check the Institute website for more information on the year's programs: <http://www.worldculture.org>

### PRISM Online Community Calendar

PRISM lists member-recommended community events of interest on the IWC website. If you wish to contribute a listing for a local or regional community event of interest, please e-mail [donna@worldculture.org](mailto:donna@worldculture.org) so it can be considered for inclusion in PRISM.

### eNewsletter

If you'd like to contribute to the eNewsletter, please send your ideas to [gerry@worldculture.org](mailto:gerry@worldculture.org) for consideration. Summaries of what you gained from presentations are welcome.

### Membership and Donation Information

Individual Membership \$35  
Individual Student Membership \$15  
Individual Supporting Membership \$70  
Individual Sustaining Membership \$350

To join the Institute, please e-mail [memberships@worldculture.org](mailto:memberships@worldculture.org).

The Institute of World Culture is a non-profit 501(c)3 educational organization dedicated to the principles of universal fellowship and life-long learning. It relies solely on the support of its members. Donations to the Institute of World Culture are gratefully accepted and are tax deductible.

### Volunteer Efforts

The Institute offers its programs by means of voluntary efforts.  
Please contact [carolyn@worldculture.org](mailto:carolyn@worldculture.org) if you'd like to volunteer.

### Institute of World Culture

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