



SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA URANTIA SOCIETY

DEVELOPMENTS

Number 30

Summer/Fall 1989

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

This issue of *Developments* offers a more focused perspective on the subject of outreach. Our Master, Michael, while in the flesh, exhorted us to go about doing good, to proclaim the essential message of his gospel and to utilize our God-given gifts of the Spirit: our Adjuster Guides, the Holy Spirit and the Spirit of Truth. With the midwayers, angels and our seraphic planetary government and constellation supervisors, we have a virtual army of spiritual forces to aid and direct us, nonetheless I sometimes find it distressing that Urantia Book believers and their organizations ie: the Foundation, the Brotherhood and various Urantia Book-inspired groups can get so entangled in controversy concerning outreach.

Perhaps we are at a disadvantage because we have no visible spiritual leadership namely a Planetary Prince or Adam and Eve to actually demonstrate the way we are supposed to proceed. After all, in any given situation there is usually a best and right way to do something. Jesus showed such flexibility by proclaiming the gospel in a seemingly unlimited number of ways. Yet we are mere mortals struggling with our animal heritage and ego needs in our efforts to achieve what we believe is right. And this process undoubtedly leads many of us to an attitude complex which, in simple terms could be described as "I'm right--you're wrong".

Then again, maybe we are all "right" - maybe our combined and diverse struggle will be our greatest contribution to the unfolding of the Supreme... perhaps the evolving Diety is gaining exquisite satisfaction from our efforts, as we Adjuster-indwelt mortals, long isolated on a troubled planet learn to co-operate for the good of the whole.

So as we struggle onward, upward and inward, let's not take ourselves so seriously while we learn to love each other for our differences as well as our commonalities.

Lee Smith

SPECIAL EVENTS COMING UP! See Next Page For Info ...

NEWS AND VIEWS

ANNOUNCEMENTS

JESUS BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

Sunday, August 20

Old Speedway Meadow
Golden Gate Park, San Francisco
Near 38th Ave. and Lincoln Way
(Same place as last year)

See map below

Potluck Lunch 1:00 PM

Family Celebration of Jesus' Birthday 3:00 PM

Bring musical instruments!

Also bring blankets, chairs and folding tables,
if you have them. (No hot BBQ this year.)

Special Evening Remembrance Supper

6:30PM (following celebration in the park)

St. Peter's Episcopal Church, Upstairs

420 29th Avenue

San Francisco

Study meeting follows at 7:30 PM

Worship Event/ Remembrance Supper

Date: Saturday, July 29

Place: St. Peter's Episcopal Church, in the Chapel

420 29th Avenue

San Francisco

Time: 5:30PM to 7:30PM

Those who wish to will go out to a nearby
restaurant for dinner afterwards.

For more info: Call Jay Peregrine at 415-621-4105

Fall Equinox Potluck

Date: Saturday, September 23

Place: Chuck and Claire Thurston's home

237 Rivoli Street (Between Stanyan and Shrader)

San Francisco

Time: 12 Noon

For more info: Call Claire Thurston at 415-564-1826

Fall Retreat

Date: October or November

Place: Different sites are being considered

Call Lee Smith if interested: 408-462-4823

The Jesus' Birthday picnic site
is Old Speedway Meadow, (not to be
confused with "Speedway Meadow"!)

See you there!

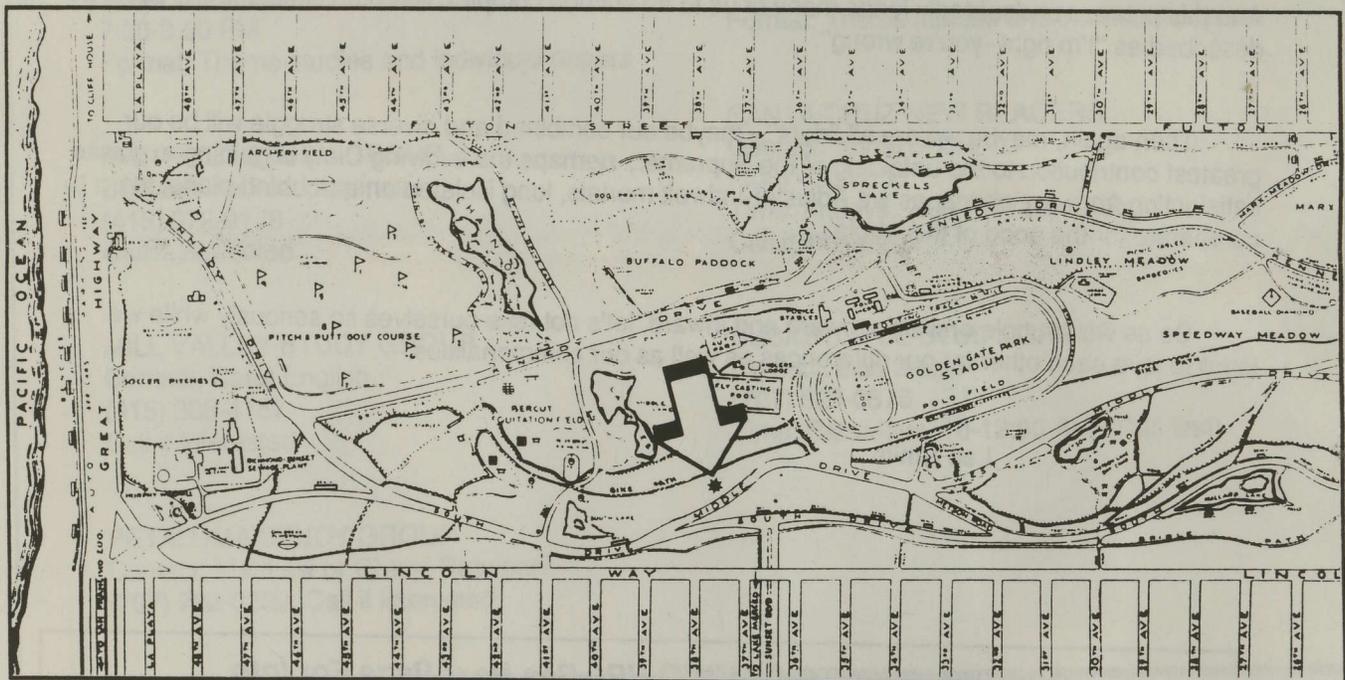
(Just follow the arrow ...)

Study Intensive on the Trinity

Date: November 11

Place: To be announced

Call Stephen Zendt if interested: 415-821-9363



URANTIA BROTHERHOOD NOW TRULY INTERNATIONAL

The lushly forested lake country southeast of Helsinki was the setting for a momentous occasion -- the chartering of the first international society of the Urantia Brotherhood.

Finnish readers trace their history of the revelation to 1968 when an American woman from Santa Barbara sent a copy of the Urantia Book home with a visitor who could barely read English. The book found its way into others' hands, and a group of seekers were soon studying the papers.

Over the last twenty years three separate attempts at translating the Urantia book into Finnish have been made. The most recent is nearing completion; details for publication are being worked out. A Finnish language version opens a new era of outreach in this country of five million strategically located as a gateway to the Soviet Union.

About twenty Americans attended the conference and witnessed the initial role-signing ceremony by fifty-

seven individuals on June 3, 1989. David Elders, President of Urantia Brotherhood presented the charter, assisted by Berkeley Elliot, chairwoman of the International Fellowship committee and Mary Lou Hales, representing the Charter committee. Also attending were Martin Myers, President of Urantia Foundation and Georges and Marlene DuPont from Paris.

For ten of us, the conference was the climax of a two-week trip through the Scandinavian countryside, highlighted by cruises on the Norwegian fjords and tours of Bergen, Oslo and Helsinki. The beauty, orderliness and cleanliness of this part of our planet is legendary. The trip concluded in London, where some English readers shared dinner at our hotel.

The following weekend saw the chartering of the second non-American based society in Canada. Increasingly we are becoming a truly international movement. With the upcoming publication of the Spanish translation, we can look forward to more opportunities for multi-cultural fellowship.

Larry Geis

BAY AREA OUTREACH

(Ed. note: The following set of articles reflect the variety of outreach activities that Bay Area readers are currently pursuing. We are not attempting to approve or disapprove of any of these actions -- we're just glad to be able to report that there is so much enthusiasm and motivation within our ranks! All views and suggestions regarding the large and complex issue of outreach are welcome. We would like to run a regular column on this subject if there is sufficient interest.)

Area Co-ordinator Program Launched

On March 18 of this year I had the pleasure of attending the training session of the newly inaugurated Area Coordinators Program. It was a beautiful and sparkling day in Malibu as about twenty Area Coordinators from the western states gathered together for the orientation presented by members of the Foundation and the Brotherhood including members of the Domestic Extension Committee and Field Representatives. Since this program is a direct outgrowth of the Urantia Brotherhood's Field Representative system, it greatly enlarges the number of people able to serve in this capacity.

Basically, the Area Coordinator's job is to offer assistance to study groups, to visit the different groups and encourage area activities among them. We also will respond to inquiries from individuals who are looking for other readers and or assistance in starting a group. We are, in effect, a service rather than an association.

As well as being a training session, the day was also an opportunity to engage in creative discussions, since this program is in its beginning stages. All of the participants seemed full of enthusiasm as we realized that we truly are developing "as we go." For me, this adds the necessary ingredient of excitement and anticipation of things to come.

I already have had numerous conversations with truth seekers looking for study group and fellowship opportunities. Here's hoping that all of them will take up the invitation to socialize with fellow readers and join us in some of our upcoming Society activities.

It is my pleasure to serve as the "AC" for the Central Coast and I'm looking forward to visiting all of our groups in the next few months.

In the Father's Light,
Chrissy Smith

Participation In Outreach Project Sought

"...even the restatement of the religion of Jesus must develop a new and appropriate symbolism."

(Urantia Book, page 966)

I am currently serving as editor for the sequel to the Jesusonian Foundation's magazine, *Life After Death*. This sequel will be on the religion of Jesus. The purpose of this publication is twofold. The Magazine will act as a signpost or book review pointing the way and interesting potential readers of *The Urantia Book*. It will also be designed to give its audience a flavor of the Midwayer's sublime biography. The plan is for the Magazine to be published by the Jesusonian Foundation and distributed by Urantia Book readers to persons with whom they are acquainted. The publication will thus serve as a tool for personal outreach rather than as stand-alone advertisement.

My goal is to build upon what has been done and give the publication a new "look" that will be subtle and artistically sensitive. I hope that the text and illustrations will work to distinguish the restatement of the religion of Jesus found in *The Urantia Book* from paganized and commercialized Christianity.

It is my hope that the "genius of the group" can somehow be tapped for this important project. I am therefore requesting all of you readers of the *Urantia Book* to send me photocopies of photographs or artwork that you think would compliment such a presentation. All sources should be considered as we may purchase the right to use copyrighted works where essential. Color and black and white illustrations will be used in the Magazine. The size or quality of the copy does not matter at this point as we will be going to the source for what we ultimately decide to use. In this phase of the

project we need to accumulate as many pictures as possible from which to choose. Therefore, even if you can't send pictures, please drop me a line describing illustrations you feel would be appropriate. Be sure to include the source of all works submitted. Contributors of works that are ultimately used in the Magazine will be credited, all others will be greatly appreciated nonetheless.

In my opinion there must be the freedom for people to try to develop "appropriate symbolism" for the restatement of the religion of Jesus even though no secondary work can be as good as *The Urantia Book* itself. I believe

that, within the guidelines of the Brotherhood, there is an urgent need for outreach. Send picture samples and ideas to:

Steve McIntosh,
1124 Montgomery St,
SF 94133

Thanks!



Expo Follow-Up

On Thursday, May 11 an introductory *Urantia Book* study group was held at St. Peter's Church in San Francisco. The evening was hosted by Claire Thurston, Byron Belitsos, Larry Geis and Steve McIntosh, each of whom introduced a different part of the book with selected readings and discussion. It was a conscious decision to have four different people's understanding of the Book represented to avoid domination of any one person's interpretation. By describing our own experi-

ences with the Book, we hoped to help overcome any intimidation in the new people.

Those who attended heard about the workshop through a flier handed out at the *Urantia Book* booth at the Whole Life Expo held in San Francisco on the last weekend in April. Seven new readers came to the meeting (approximately 60 fliers were handed out) as well as a few long time readers who wanted to share the experience. Although it took most of the evening to get through the presentations,

some thoughtful discussion ensued. A follow-up meeting was held the next week and three of the original attendees returned to learn more about the Book.

Our intuitive impressions were that the meetings proved fruitful and another such introductory meeting is planned for late July. Information about this meeting will

be sent to the list of 60 who signed up to receive more information about the Urantia book at the Whole Life Expo. Names and addresses of others who might be interested in attending the July workshop should be sent to:

Claire Thurston,
237 Rivoli St., San Francisco CA 94117.

Peace Day Booth: An Outreach Activity of the Santa Cruz Study Group

Our study group was looking for a way to be involved in a service project in the community and also for an appropriate setting to introduce the Urantia Book. After ruling out craft fairs, psychic fairs and other similar public gatherings, we decided that Peace Day, as celebrated in Santa Cruz, would be a great place for a booth.

In Santa Cruz, Peace Day has been celebrated since 1984. This year it was declared a state-wide day for celebrating peace. The theme of discovering our common ground highlights our diversity in culture, religion, and lifestyles while recognizing our unity in purpose for world peace. Many religious groups have been a part of Peace Day and a beautiful, moving inter-faith celebration takes place at the end of each Peace Day. It really inspires everyone to take peace back with them into their homes and communities.

Our study group discussed how we would approach the problem of presenting the Urantia Book and tying it into the theme for Peace Day. After several lively discussions, the idea of a live video interview to get people to talk about peace in their lives was proposed. We refined the idea into a booth which would show a continuous video of people being interviewed by one of our booth/study group members during the course of the day.

All of those involved volunteered to take on various aspects of the project -- from finding a camera to building the booth. Things seemed to move along and on Peace Day a booth emerged from an eclectic collection of "parts and labor". It had a very cozy, home-like atmosphere, with a TV and VCR set up in one corner and a table with Urantia Books and literature across the front of the booth.

For the interview, we formulated three questions which would (we hoped) open people up to the spiritual aspects of Peace Day. We also had strips of paper and colored pens available for anyone wishing to write their own peace quote. We hung these on the walls creating a free form peace wall.

We found that some people were hesitant to be interviewed in front of a live video camera, although one man, after expressing fear of being interviewed, went ahead and gave a personal testimony to peace. After viewing it, he seemed to have made a breakthrough in personal growth by facing and overcoming a fear.

Our study group felt that the booth was a success and we all voted to do it again next year. We welcome anyone interested in joining us. The people who participated were: Lee and Chrissy Smith, Martha Gilbert, Dennis Rousseau, Phil Geiger, Angel Shore, Isaiah Watkins and Kim Tunella.

- Lee Smith and Martha Gilbert

Common Ground Follow-up

Common Ground is like a Bay Area-wide "yellow pages" of things spiritual. With the thought that the Urantia Movement should have greater visibility, I wrote a short statement on the Book which was included for the first time in the winter edition.

Although SFBAUS approved the statement and split the cost with me (\$129) for this first printing, money was not available to sustain the expense of the next printing.

I sadly informed *Common Ground* that since I could not fund the statement myself, we would have to skip the spring issue. However, just before press time they called me and offered to run the statement for free with the hope that we would become a paying customer in the summer issue.

I and others took up a collection and funded the summer issue in which we included a phone number for the first time. We have had several calls but the lines have not been flooded.

I am now a member of the newly formed Outreach Committee of SFBAUS. Unfortunately, SFBAUS dues only cover ongoing costs for events, and *Developments* has had to be cut back to two issues per year. Any donations sent to SFBAUS can be earmarked for a particular project. If everyone who receives this newsletter, for example, were to send \$2 to SFBAUS, we could fund the Urantia Book statement in *Common Ground* for the next year! You can help spread the word!

- Steve McIntosh

FAMILY FOCUS

In the Father's Family

My daughter, infant son and I experienced a fulfilling remembrance supper oriented towards three and four year olds at the home of Francyl and Marvin Gawryn a few weeks ago. Angela, my four year old was visiting her three year old twin friends, Jessie and Mikayla. Every Sunday the Gawryns share this prayer time and Francyl remarked how the remembrance fulfills her worship needs also.

Jessie and Mikayla seemed very accustomed to their Sunday worship time because they were involved at every step. First, breakfast dishes were cleared away, then the girls scampered to find their special plates, which they set at each place. Francyl placed a couple of cherries on each plate to signify the fruits of the spirit, filled cups with juice, then we sat down together. Marvin helped the girls light candles, setting the peaceful mood then passed Francyl's tone bar around the table. This was the call to worship. We held hands as each one thanked God for something from bunnies to trees to music to love. Francyl then read a couple of prayers from Prayers from the Ark: The Creatures Choir by Carmen Bernos De Gasztold, a delightful collection of prayers written from the point of view of different animals; we heard grace from an elephant and a songbird. Francyl pulled out her guitar and sang a couple of requests while the girls danced. Finally Marvin brought out a newsprint pad

and talked about the picture of the universe which he and the girls had drawn the week before. (This wasn't part of their regular routine.) Spiralling from the dot at the center where God lives on Paradise, stars and other creatures filled the page. To end, the girls blew out the candles waving the smoke to the cosmos.

My daughter was so affected by this remembrance that she insisted on praying at every meal and before bed for the week following. Things have calmed down a bit now. But I was delighted to see that even my infant could participate - I held his hand to tap the bell and he sat wide-eyed throughout the half hour transfixed by the sights and sounds. Angela astounded us with the depth of her hunger for worship and her insights that following week, she pronounced that "God can hear what you think even if you don't say it." Another day she insisted that my husband and I both say, "I love you God." I felt God come closer through and with my daughter and realized how much our family needed a regular worship time even with "pre-Adjuster" aged children. Since then we have improvised our own version of the family remembrance supper and look forward to sharing with other friends and family.

Claire Thurston



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Claire Thurston



LESSONS FOR THE URANTIA MOVEMENT
Crisis in the Early Christian Church

In the church which I attend (St. Gregory's Episcopal in San Francisco) a great deal of value is placed on personal experience. Nowhere in the life of the church is this more evident than in the period following the Sunday homily. This time is set aside for responses to the sermon from the congregation. Members and visitors so moved are invited to stand and relate "what came up for them" as they listened to the preacher. The only caveat to this invitation is that their response must be from personal experience. The effect of this proscription would not be lost on Urantia Book readers: not only does it side-step any inclinations of individuals to theological or political dissertation, but argument in general is avoided (who can argue with a personal experience?) What does "come up" more often than not is a moving revelation of personal religion --

personal encounters with the Spirit, with God, with Jesus. This is the arena of true, living, evolving religion.

The experiences of our contemporaries are often available to us directly through such encounters, but experience is not limited to the present. What of the experience of the millions of humans who had deeply personal encounters with God, with Christ and the Spirit in the past? Much of that experience is lost to us (except through revelation); some, by chance or providence or more often careful effort and conservation has been passed down to us -- in the form of literature, history, art, music, and especially religious writings.

Not very long ago I felt drawn to search out and reach some understanding of the experiences of early Christians and the early Christian community with the Spirit of Jesus which was poured out at Pentecost. The Urantia Book follows some of the happenings of the Early Church for a while, especially those relating to the apostles, and makes



St. Paul Preaching to the Thessalonians, Gustave Dore

some sweeping statements about the Church's general condition, mistakes and successes, but leaves off its story in general where the gospels do: with Pentecost. I think I have discovered the reason why: there is for the most part an increasingly complex treasure-trove of records available beginning from the point the book leaves off and going forward in history. Discovering these records -- in the light of the understanding of their antecedent events as revealed in the Urantia Book -- continues to be an exciting pursuit for me, and has vastly expanded my understanding of a different era altogether: the present -- and especially the present experiences of the Urantia Movement! Our experiences as a fledgling religious movement have many parallels with the experience of the Early Church, some of which I would like to suggest here.

Here is a chronological outline of the main problems (as I understand them) which the Christian community faced as a group in its first 500 years. Of course there was much overlap between these "crises", and many other problems arose (some much more famous, like being thrown to the lions). But these five crises represent the crucial steps in the evolution of the early church:

1) The old religion (Judaism) and the new -- which patterns to give up, which to retain, what religious laws and practices to follow, what to give up, and importantly: why?

2) The church's defense against the diminution, perversion, and dissolution of the gospel of and truth about Jesus. This was surely the most important issue of the first 300 years, and was triggered by a movement know today as "Gnosticism". The Gnostics were syncretic; they freely borrowed creeds from various religions, Hebrew, Christian, and pagan, and just as freely combined them into ever-changing and conflicting creeds and doctrines. The result was a genuine threat to the truth of the revelation which the fledgling church had inherited.

The church's defense was threefold:

(a) Standardization of the Gospels and limitation of other accepted inspired writings.

(b) Establishment of a line of accredited teachers (the Bishops were the inheritors of the apostle's teaching office, with sole power to ordain their successors).

(c) Development of a pattern of using ecumenical councils to settle new questions and problems as they arose (The first major council, held at Nicea in 325, was and is still a tremendous power for binding together the growing church).

3) Dialogues with the non-Christian world: explanations of Christianity (know as "apologies") to the pagan world -- especially, once Christianity began to become a force in the Empire, to the educated and cultured pagan

world -- and the incorporation of the best of pagan spiritual speculation into the Christian thought-stream.

4) The working-out of difficult questions not dealt with in the teachings and revelation which the church had inherited. Because the church had come to emphasize the person of Christ over his teachings, these questions largely dealt with the nature of the person of Jesus - Man and God.

5) Adjusting (as an institution) to a changing world. The Roman Empire was slowly collapsing during most of the history of the early church, and that collapse accelerated with the barbarian invasions starting in the fifth century. The barbarians became the final and overwhelming problem of the early church, especially at Rome, after 410.

These five problems and their solutions have much to say to us as Urantia Book readers -- believers in the 20th century. I think we can better understand our own problems by understanding how those who first dealt with the gospel of Jesus and his Spirit of Truth dealt with theirs. Reading through the above list you may have noticed some similarities between the early church's problems and our own. In the next issue of *Developments* I hope to examine these similarities more closely, and perhaps find some revealing parallels in our experiences and those of the early Christians.

Jay Peregrine

Contributors to this issue of
DEVELOPMENTS:

Larry Geis
Martha Gilbert
Steve McIntosh
Jay Peregrine
Chrissy Smith
Lee Smith
Claire Thurston
Chuck Thurston
Stephen Zendt

Please send announcements,
articles or letters to the editor to:
Claire Thurston, 237 Rivoli St.
San Francisco CA 94117
(415) 564-1826

SFBAUS mailing address:
P.O. Box 460163
San Francisco, CA 94146-0163

BAY AREA STUDY GROUPS

CARMEL STUDY GROUP

Contact: Jackson and Linda Smith
(408) 625-1261, or
Todd Bliss (408) 375-5089
Time: Alternate Wednesdays (call first)

CONCORD STUDY GROUP

Contact: Sara Blackstock
(415) 672-3340
Time: Monthly, 4th Sunday, 7:00 PM
Format: Topical, rotate leaders,
rotate meeting places

EAST BAY STUDY GROUP

Contact: Marvin Gawryn
(415) 799-9284
Time: Monthly, 2nd Sunday
Study: 7:30 - 9:00 PM
Fellowship: 7:00-7:30 PM, 9:00-9:30 PM
Format: Topical, rotate leaders

MARIN STUDY GROUP, Terra Linda

Contact: Jacques Lecouturier
(415) 479-8269
Time: Monthly, 1st Thursday,
7:00-9:00 PM
Format: Theme studies and individual papers

MARTINEZ STUDY GROUP

Contact: Andrea Laspinas
(415) 372-9178
Call if interested

MILL VALLEY STUDY GROUP

Contact: Carol English
(415) 383-4157
Call if interested

PETALUMA STUDY GROUP

Contact: Matthew or Cheryl Rapaport
(707) 762-0329, Call if interested

PENINSULA STUDY GROUP

Contact: Cheryl Zents, (415) 726-0131
Time: Alternate Wednesdays, 7:30 PM
Call before, rotate meeting at members' homes
Format: Sequential by section

SAN FRANCISCO STUDY GROUP

Contact: Claire or Chuck Thurston
(415) 564-1826 or
Stephen Zendt (415) 821-9363
Time: Every Sunday, 7:30-9:30 PM
Format: Topical, Sequential

SAN JOSE STUDY GROUP

Contact: Mike Hagan, (408) 272-8458
Time: Every Wednesday, 7:30-9:30 PM
Format: Sequential, topical

SANTA CRUZ STUDY GROUP

Contact: Larry and Elizabeth Jones
(408) 425-1882 or
Lee and Chrissy Smith (408) 462-4823
Time: Every Wednesday, 8:00 PM
(First Wed. of month at Jones's,
other Wed. at Smith's)
Format: Theme studies and individual papers

SANTA CRUZ NEW READERS

Contact: Angel Shore
(408) 462-5553
Time: Fridays, 7:30 PM, as needed
Call if interested

SEBASTOPOL STUDY GROUP

Contact: Bob Slagle
(707) 823-0876
Time: Saturdays, 10-12:00 AM (Call first)