John McGregor
The Academy
May 18, 2009

The Academy at 74

My topic tonight is the recent history of The Academy. It has been 31 years since The Academy's history was last updated. Our first 43 years of existence were recounted in two previous papers, one presented in 1968[1] and the other in 1978.[2] You can find both of them on our website. I will confine my reflections to The Academy's most recent 31 years.

I am one day short of my 29th anniversary as a member, so I have been around for most of the 31 years in question. Tomorrow will also be Frank Powell's 29th anniversary. Doug Jensen, Terril Efird and Dewey Slater have all been members for over a quarter century. None of us can rival our grand old man, Jerry Blum, who has been a member for 50 years. As you see, there are others well qualified to comment on The Academy's last 31 years. Only Jerry has witnessed them all, but I could never persuade him to recount them. So I will try.

Let me say at the outset that I was fortunate to have Frank Powell's considerable help in researching this paper. He joined me for two afternoons in the Sanoian Special Collections Room of the Madden Library. There, we shared many memories, laughs and sighs as we pored over its repository of The Academy's papers and its minutes of our proceedings.

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[1] Perez Simmons, "The Academy: A History of the First Thirty-Four Years," covering the period October 1935 to May 1969.
[2] Walter Puhn, "The Academy 1969-1978: A history of the Next Ten Years" covering the period October 1969 to May 1978.

I remember well the very first meeting that Frank and I attended as members of The Academy. It was May 19, 1980. The Academy was a group of men. Members were encouraged to bring their spouses to the May meeting each year, and for that reason the May meeting was called Ladies Night.

The evening proceeded as follows. Members and their ladies convened in the bar at Pardini's Restaurant for what was called the "Attitude Adjustment Period." Frank made the scene with his quite extraordinary wife, Alice. As for me (to borrow a saying from track and field), I was running unattached. Libations in hand, we moved to the dining room for a steak supper. After dessert was served, the president rapped his gavel and called meeting number 354 of The Academy to order. He first assigned a member to collect the evening's dinner tab – the lordly sum of $10 per person. The Secretary read minutes of the 353rd meeting from a single typewritten sheet. Leon Peters, a businessman who served as a Membership Committee of one, formally introduced Frank and me to the group as The Academy's newest members. The proceedings were affectionately rambunctious, in the manner of a sort of eggheaded fraternity. All the while, the unfortunate member tasked with collecting the dinner bill was slowly moving from table to table in the discharge of his duties.

We heard a thoughtful paper delivered by an eminent physician, Kendall Holmes. It mused whether or not advances in medicine could ever reach the point of conferring immortality on the human species – and whether or not it would be prudent of the medical arts to make such an attempt.[3] Following a discussion of

[3] I remember a San Francisco Chronicle cartoon from about this time showing a semicircle of seniors sitting in wheelchairs in an old folks home. All are immobile and decrepit except one.

the paper, the outgoing president handed the gavel to the incoming president, who rapped it on the table to signal adjournment of The Academy until the following October. All of us melted into the night except for our Secretary. He was back in Pardini's kitchen counting out cash and checks to settle the evening's bill with "Susie," our waitress.[4]

There are many differences between that meeting of May 1980 and the one tonight. For one thing, the gavel disappeared a few years ago. Its whereabouts are unknown. Typewriters and single-page minutes vanished before the gavel did.

In 1980, the Membership Committee was one person – Leon Peters, who was as formidable and autocratic as he was diminutive and courtly. Today, the Committee is a group consisting of our officers, the past president, and two members at large.

In May of 1980, the members paid for dinner during the course of the meeting. This was a distraction to everyone. But it was an outright burden on the collector. He went from table to table, collecting funds and making change, while other Academy housekeeping was being conducted. At one time, Pardini's dinner tariff was $10.50. That year, the collection process – and the jingling of coins – sometimes extended even into the introduction of the speaker and the speaker's presentation. An assignment to collect the evening's bill verged on the retributive. If you were busy collecting, you were preoccupied with making change and

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Putting down her knitting, she exclaims with a bright smile, "Isn't it wonderful we took good care of ourselves so we could live to enjoy all this?"

[4] Susie is now better known as Sue Kendall, a residential real estate broker and master gardener whose beautiful rose garden frames the northwest corner of Maroa and Gettysburg.

keeping track of who had paid and who had not. You couldn't focus on the proceedings. Maybe you were wondering if you were in the president's doghouse. You were in any case the target of some cheerful ribbing from those who had escaped the assignment. Worse, the president might assign you to collect an additional few dollars for postage and deliver those additional funds to the secretary. In either case, you delivered the cash and checks to the Secretary of the Academy. He in turn settled accounts with Susie after dinner.

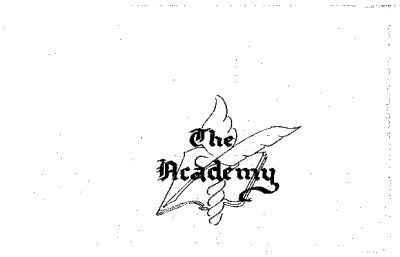
Things came to a head when, at the May 1993 meeting, Michael Gorman incorrectly calculated the per-person dinner tab. He collected too little. Michael had to come out of pocket for the shortfall – remember, everyone else had scattered – and spent that summer dunning the rest of us to pay up.[5] Michael resolved that no one else would ever be in that predicament. He proposed that we collect dinner tabs annually, in advance, rather than during the meetings. At his urging, we designated a Treasurer for Life, Jamie Canales, to handle this task. When Jamie relocated to Southern California, he anointed Dewey Slater as his successor. Dewey has proved equal to the task. Not only does he provide concise monthly reportage of our exact financial condition, tonight marks the completion of his tenth year on the job.

I mentioned the periodic collection of postage along with the evening's dinner tab. In May of 1980, we didn't have electronic mail. The Secretary's job was perhaps the Secretary's secretary's job. It involved a ponderous, monthly process of mailing[6] out notices of meetings by postcard or letter, taking telephone

[5] Minutes of May 18, 1993 meeting.

[6] Incredibly, when Frank and I were going through the special collections we found a manila

calls from members making or changing reservations, making calls to unresponsive members, and finally telephoning the restaurant to report the number of dinner reservations. By the way, the meeting notices bore the Academy's symbol: a quill and a candle set before an open book.



The meeting notice process was radically simplified in the fall of 1999 when our new secretary, Luis Costa, began emailing the notices. Four years later, another newly-elected secretary, Melvin Enns, devised a method to collate member responses electronically. At a glance, Mel could see who had reserved, whether the member was bringing a guest, and the type of meal for each. Today, The Academy is thoroughly modern. It has a website and its own webmaster, incoming secretary Greg Powell. Unfortunately, The Academy's symbol – the quill, candle and book – has fallen into disuse.

In 1980, The Academy met in eight consecutive months from October to May, always on the third Monday of the month. We departed from this simple scheduling in several stages. In 1982, the group resolved that the February 1983 meeting would be on the second Monday of the month to avoid conflict with Presidents Day; ultimately this change became permanent. In 1994, we

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envelope with a few dollars in currency transmitted from one secretary to his successor. The envelope lain undisturbed for over a decade. We took the liberty of secreting the funds out of the library and delivering them to Dewey Slater. We also found a manila envelope containing unsullied six-cent postcards in the archives. We left these for posterity.

recognized that it was unreasonable to require members to prepare and present a paper during the December holidays, especially considering that December attendance could be skimpy. So we moved the December meeting to September.[7] Finally, to avoid conflict with the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday, we decided in 2001 to move January's meeting to the second Monday of the month as well.

No history of The Academy's last 31 years would be complete without a retelling of its meeting locations. Over that period, we've convened in nine different venues. Are we fickle? Not at all. Our group presents special problems. We are sufficiently numerous to require either a sizeable and separate meeting room or the entire restaurant. The location needs to be convenient to members coming from out of town. There must be a well-lit place for the speaker's podium. Quiet during the speaker's presentation is essential. Equally vital is a well-stocked bar. Meetings are far more convivial when preceded by a suitably-provisioned Attitude Adjustment Period. In these last 31 years, we stopped doing business with some restaurants because they stopped being quiet.[8] Other locales closed on us.[9] We stopped going to another because it could only offer wine – not very good wine at that – during the Attitude Adjustment Period.[10] For years, there was resistance to meeting at The Downtown Club other than in May, when our numbers are largest, because downtown Fresno was considered crime-

[7] Minutes of the March 21, 1994 meeting.
[8] My October 1985 paper on cosmology at Pardini's Restaurant was drowned out by Monday Night Football and country western music. It was our first meeting of the year. We discovered that the restaurant had reinvented itself over the summer to become a singles hangout. Needless to say, the discussion after the paper was one of the shortest ever. I was president. I saw to it that our next meeting was at Reuben's.
[9] Reuben's and D'Mils.
[10] Dinner wine wasn't very good either. During our last night at Love & Garlic, its wait staff made a special effort to drown out the speaker with a cacophony of dishes being washed and stacked.

ridden. We have now been meeting regularly here for over three years. In that time, none of us has been mugged, molested or murdered. The Downtown Club not only addresses all of our special needs, it provides good food expertly and cheerfully served. It has become our home.

I now move to the biggest change of all. In 1980, The Academy was a group of men. It first convened on October 17, 1935. In the ensuing 45 years, its Bylaws had always scrupulously referred to members as “men” and provided for the election of “men” as members. Women appeared only in May, and then only as companions of the members.

Some of us were incredulous that The Academy would exclude half of the population from membership. The Academy didn't otherwise discriminate either in theory or in practice. If academic viewpoints are honed by diversity, then why, we asked, would The Academy exclude the feminine perspective? There were two responses to this. Some members wanted to preserve The Academy as a “boys’ night out.” It pains me to tell you that still others believed women just weren’t up to presenting a quality paper. So when in 1984 Jerry Blum unexpectedly passed around a ballot proposing that women be admitted to membership, the idea was rejected by a vote of 15 to 7.[11] Notwithstanding this snub by The Academy, women continued to gain acceptance in the workplace – and particularly in the professions and in academe, from which The Academy still draws most of its membership.

[11] Minutes of the November 19, 1984 meeting. Womens' points of view might have been especially well taken that evening. Frank Powell's topic was "Abortion – an Issue Which May Live Forever."

Change had to come to The Academy, and mercifully it did. It happened that one of our members, Hollis Best, was presiding judge of the Fifth District Court of Appeal. He held sway as one the very "best" of Fresno's good old boys. Hollie's reputation as a jurist reached Sacramento, and Governor Deukmejian put him on the short list of candidates for appointment to the California Supreme Court. At the height of the speculation over whom the Governor would appoint, Hollie presented a paper on the night of October 20, 1986. As the president rose to gavel the discussion period to a close, Hollie asked to make an announcement. He explained to the group that California's canons of judicial ethics precluded him from belonging to organizations that discriminated on the basis of race, religion or, for that matter, gender. Hollie announced his resignation.[12]

This dramatic event gave the conspirators their opening. They made sure that the meeting minutes reflected that the judicial rules prohibited membership in clubs practicing "invidious" discrimination. Months of lobbying and debate ensued on the topic of whether or not we should fix the "sexual orientation" of our Bylaws.[13] Finally, our secretary, Dewey Slater, mailed a written ballot to the members along with the April 1987 meeting notice. The ballot asked a simple question: "Shall membership in The Academy be open to women?" President Terril Efird appointed Frank Powell and me to collect the ballots as the members filed into the dining room for dinner. We waited for stragglers. The last latecomer gave us an appraising look and asked what the vote was so far; we didn't reply,

[12] Minutes of the October 20, 1986 meeting.
[13] Minutes of the December 15, 1986 and February 27, 1987 meetings.

as we didn't know. We've always wondered how he voted. As dinner ended, Frank and I tallied the ballots. The vote was 11 to 10 in favor of admitting women.

That women were admitted only by the thinnest of margins made it clear to the conspirators that their work had only just begin. The admission of women had proved to be a deeply divisive proposition. Would the group hold together? The change agents bided their time. It was clear that the first women members would have to do more than meet the usual conditions of preeminence in their professions and prominence in the community at large. No, these candidates would have to be especially charming and not a little nervy. At length, they approached Judy Soley about membership. Judy had a record of being the first woman on her block to do all sorts of things. She had in 1986 served as the first woman president of the Fresno County Bar. So it was only appropriate that she became the first woman to attend a meeting of The Academy other than on a Ladies' Night.[14] In time, she graciously agreed to be nominated for admission to The Academy. The nomination was made and the conspirators held their collective breath. After all, election to The Academy required unanimous consent.

Fortunately, there were no objections to Judy's admission to membership. Nor were there any defections from the group. Judy attended her first meeting as a member on April 18, 1988.[15] The title "Ladies' Night" was not used for the May meeting that year. The May meeting was instead assigned the title it bears to the present day: "Significant Others' Night." And what of Hollie Best's resignation? It

[14] Minutes of the November 16, 1987 meeting.

[15] The late Beverly Kees, at that time editor of *The Fresno Bee*, was elected the following year as our second woman member. She was followed by the late Mary Ludwig, a professor of cultural anthropology at Fresno State. It wasn't until 1993 that we actually got around to changing the

was never accepted. When The Academy resolved to admit women, Hollie resumed attending our meetings. He never did get that Supreme Court nomination, but he did nab what many believe to be the plum job in the entire federal judiciary. Hollie was appointed Federal magistrate for Yosemite National Park and, with a farewell wave to The Academy, relocated to the shadow of Half Dome.

So there you have some highlights of the changes to our meetings. Societal tectonics are not the only things that have affected us. The Academy's archives vividly illustrate changes in communications technology that were unimaginable in 1980. What has been preserved of The Academy's records of proceedings and papers repose in nine neat boxes in the Sanoian Special Collections Room of Madden Library. It was a simple task to search the records from the year 1978. They are all paper. But, by the early 1990's the use of personal computers had become widespread. Paper communications began to wane. Beginning with the fall of 1999, all minutes and meeting notices were electronic. When one considers these developments, it comes as no surprise that the archives contain scant records of our proceedings over the last decade. When I set out to research and write this paper, I didn't expect that it would be harder to piece together The Academy's last ten years than to reconstruct its preceding 21! I found myself wondering what this bodes for future chroniclers of The Academy. For that matter, what does it portend for historians generally?[16]

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language of the Bylaws to refer to “persons” rather than to “men.”

[16] At least it was easy to find out that nobody had anything by the way of records for some of the years after 1988. I simply emailed all the officers from those periods and they emailed back.

The Academy's last 31 years have seen profound changes in the professions. Some have affected the composition of our membership.

The ever tightening regulation of medicine by third party payors has greatly burdened our physicians. Many doctors work long hours to manage larger staffs necessary to cope with mounting restrictions on their economic and professional decisions. Papers presented to the group by Larry Barman,[17] Terril Efird[18] and Kendall Manock[19] all warned us this was coming. Sadly, no physician has been proposed for election to membership since Joe Capell and Steve Stephenson in 1997.

The steady decrease in religious vocations is reflected in our recent inability to attract or retain religious leaders to membership. Declining vocations have meant fewer clergy to serve a growing population. In May 1980, The Academy enjoyed the simultaneous presence of two rabbis and a Roman Catholic priest. But since 2002 there has been no rabbi, priest or minister in our membership. When approached about membership in The Academy, people of the cloth tell us they simply don't have enough personal time to invest in The Academy. I wonder what this says about the interplay of religious institutions and society at large. How are religious institutions affected as their representatives take on fewer associations outside the walls of their churches, temples and mosques? How well do the clergy serve their flocks when their intellectual lives are so restricted?

[17] "The Changing Face of American Medicine," presented February 27, 1984.
[18] "When Can I See My Doctor?" presented February 21, 1994.

The Academy's ability to attract new members may also have been damaged by the emergence of some local attractions over the last 31 years. In the 1980's there was Fresno State athletics. One Academy meeting was delayed during the Bulldogs' run to the National Invitation Tournament basketball championship in the early 1980s. We all watched in the bar at Pardini's Restaurant while Omel Nieves sank the free throws that beat Michigan State. By the 1990s, Fresno had an excellent symphony orchestra. In the last decade, The Fresno Grand Opera, headed by Ron Eichman, has come to attract fans from all over the West. Most recently, the Sav-Mart Center has become one of the premiere live performance venues in the entire Republic. (You may recall that the Sav-Mart Center was inaugurated by Andrea Bocelli, who was enticed to Fresno by -- who else? -- Ron Eichman.[20])

Fortunately, some changes in our world have allowed for greater participation in The Academy. Improvements in communication and transportation have been a boon to us. In 1980, members were all from the Fresno community. Electronic mail and new and better roads now make it possible for us to enjoy the companionship of a broader geographic diversity of members. We currently boast Kingburg's Mel Enns, president Terry Amaro (who works in Riverdale), and Tom Biglione (who divides his time among Fresno, Stockton and Los Angeles). One of our newer members, Tom Williams, is a rocket scientist who lives in Fresno but telecommutes all over the country for Boeing.

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[19] "A Nonprofessional's View of Health Care," presented (extemporaneously!) March 20, 1995.
[20] Ron shared the story of this coup in "The Business of Art: The Lawyer and His Pipes," presented

Speaking of geographic diversity, we have had great fortune with our immigrant members. For example, Sergio Negro came to us from Italy and, as pastor of Fresno's Newman Center, became a regional beacon of ethical guidance and interfaith dialogue. José Elgorriaga, a sheepherder as a child, fled the Spanish Civil War. He became a professor of comparative literature, a nationally recognized soccer coach, and an international poetry judge. Luis Costa also emigrated from Spain. He became Dean of the College of Arts and Humanities at Fresno State. Nearer to my heart, Luis founded University High School, which this year and last (in only its sixth and seventh years of existence) has been recognized by *U S News and World Report* as one of the 100 best high schools of over 15,000 surveyed around the nation. Michael Gorman, from Britain, was elected head of the American Library Association.

We do like to think that The Academy consists of the best and the brightest. Some of us are so talented that we are lured away from Fresno to brighter lights in other communities. One might ask, where are they now? Former member Keith Baxter formed a propane distribution company that ultimately grossed half a billion dollars per year. Unfortunately, the company fell on hard times, and Keith was forced from office by a Securities Exchange Commission investigation and shareholder lawsuits. Former member Corky Normart overcame divisions among Catholics, Orthodox Christians and Jews to perform restoration work on one of the most hallowed structures on earth, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. Just recently, Daniel Dooley was appointed Senior Vice

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October 20, 2003.

President of External Relations for University of California.[21] Alexander Gonzalez is president of California State University Sacramento. Tony Correia lives in Sonoma, poor guy, and appraises vineyards and wineries across the nation.

Obviously, the last 31 years have brought us many unforgettable members. We've also had members who forgot us. During the last three decades we elected to membership a County Chief Administrative Officer, a General Manager of *The Fresno Bee* and an executive director of The Fresno Art Center. None of them ever once attended a meeting! Alas, we also have a history of members abruptly resigning when they have a presentation coming due. We even had a president who during his term in office repeatedly forgot to attend meetings.

Fortunately, we've also had members who made exceptional efforts to contribute. Two speakers gave papers on their last nights in The Academy. Steve Stephenson presented a marvelous paper on the history of eugenics and genetic engineering.[22] He left Fresno the very next morning to run a childrens' hospital in Iowa. At last year's May meeting, Ellen Gruenbaum presented a paper on diamonds and blood in Africa. She then departed to chair the anthropology department at Purdue University.

Over the years, some of our most magic moments were made memorable by music. At a Significant Others Night several years ago, Terril Efird explored the genesis and traced the successive repackagings of an obscure Zulu folk song.

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[21] His $380,000-per-year compensation package drew fire from at least one State legislator. "Lawmaker Schools UC about Hefty Exec Pay," *The Fresno Bee,* March 8, 2009, p.B-1 (comments of State Senator Leland Yee, D-San Francisco).

[22] "Designer Children," presented February 2003.

That song is now familiar to us as “The Lion Sleeps Tonight.”[23] On another occasion, José Elgorriaga presented an appreciation of flamenco music. He brought along his good friend, the guitarist Juan Serrano, to make his points more vividly than words alone could ever do.[24]

. In 2007 Ron Eichman undertook to explain the magic of live musical performance. Ron posited that the following elements must be present to create a magical theatrical moment: (1) the artist must believe in the material being performed, (2) the material must be compelling, (3) the performance must be presented in an intimate environment, and (4) the audience must be receptive. These four elements -- the artist’s belief, the compelling material, the intimacy of environment and receptivity of the audience -- must blend harmoniously. Towards the end of Ron's presentation, hooded figures filtered noiselessly into the room and lined the walls. As Ron finished, the lights went out. Our visitors, holding tiny electric candles for illumination, were the Fresno Grand Opera chorus. They sang the chorus of the Hebrew Slaves from Verdi’s opera *Nabucco*, and in doing so they delivered the magic of the theatre to a spellbound Academy exactly according to Ron's formula. It was the first standing ovation anybody could remember at an Academy meeting.[25] How I wish we had recorded that evening!

A session perhaps incapable of recording was Tony Correia’s presentation on wine fallacies.[26] Tony brought and opened several cases of wine. *Some* of the contents did serve to illustrate Tony’s points. Confronted with so many offerings,

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[23] "The Lion and the Zulu," presented March 21, 2001.
[24] "Gypsies and Flamenco," presented February 15, 1999.
[25] "The Magic of the Theatre – Empirically Speaking," presented February 12, 2007.
[26] "The Wrath of Grapes," presented September 18, 1998.

the members displayed an unquenchable thirst for learning. They drank deeply at the font of knowledge. By some miracle, all of us made it home without incident (at least without incident that anyone would admit). Incidents or not, the next morning many of us remembered the title of Tony's paper. It was "The Wrath of Grapes."

For controversy, nobody has outdone our 2004 Significant Others Night speaker, Gary Sawyers. His talk on environmental policy[27] so aggravated some of our guests that they had to be hustled out of the room after the discussion period.

The Academy is accustomed to having a paper read by the presenter, followed by a discussion period. We have deviated from this format twice. In one instance, the presenter mailed out the paper before the meeting and during the meeting a response to the paper was read by a second member.[28] In another, the presenter mailed out introductory materials ahead of time and both the paper and a response were read.[29] The responder effectively keynoted both discussions. This paper-and-response format proved labor intensive but engendered marvelous discussions. I hope someone else will try it one of these days.

Although we do not seek publicity, we have been twice been the subject of articles in *The Fresno Bee.* In the late 1980s, one front-page article darkly speculated that The Academy was a secret think tank. It listed all our members in

[27] "Saving the World One Lie at a Time," presented May 17, 2004.
[28] Before the October 1988 meeting I circulated a paper on the sociology of the cowboy western movie to which Sergio Negro wrote a response. May paper was in turn ruminating on thoughts Sergio had presented in his paper the previous May.
[29] In advance of the April 1994 meeting, Mary Ludwig circulated "The Midnight Court," a poem by the 18th Century Irish poet Brian Merriman. I was privileged to be the discussant of Mary's paper on the poem, Celtic poetry and history, and poetry generally.

case there was any doubt. In 1998, our 500th meeting was commemorated by columnist Eli Setencich on the front page of the *Bee's* local section.[30]

One of the delights of researching this paper was seeing the witty repartee that spices the business portions of meeting minutes from bygone days. I've already mentioned our deliberations on whether or not to change the sexual orientation of the Bylaws. There's more. Successive presidents would sometimes ask lawyer Max Hayden, one of our oldest and crustiest members, if there was any old business. Max always had a witty reply. Lifting forefinger to the breeze, Max once rumbled that the speed of events was such as to preclude the existence of any old business.[31] Another set of minutes reads: "Keith Baxter, chairman of the Membership Committee, spoke eloquently for a time; several members agreed with him."[32] Minutes of another meeting reflect that the member collecting the dinner tab chose to participate in the business portion of the meeting. He accordingly lost track of who had paid and who had not. Some wit attributed the collector's confusion to "payus interruptus."[33] My favorite? Doug Jensen beautifully reprised a paper by Clem Renzi. On hearing Doug's minutes, Clem quipped that if the truth be known "he would have preferred to attend the same meeting Mr. Jensen had."[34] Witticisms like these bespeak the close-knit fellowship of those days.[35]

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[30] Setencich, "Academy Hits the Big 500," *The Fresno Bee*, Nov. 9, 1998, p. B1.
[31] Minutes of March 19, 1984 meeting.
[32] Minutes of October 21, 1985 meeting (by Doug Jensen). Clem's paper was on the lost wax process.
[33] Minutes of January 19, 1987 meeting.
[34] Minutes of October 20, 1986 meeting (by Dewey Slater).
[35] During our 50th anniversary year, each meeting featured a remembrance by the most senior members of "the old days." When it came his turn, Walt Puhn, who authored the history of The Academy's 1969 to 1978 years, reminded us that two meetings in 1972 had been given the same

A survey of the minutes discloses that Jerry Blum is our poet laureate. Periodically, a presentation would provoke Jerry to scribble doggerel on the spot. For example, after Dewey Slater (a liberal) lambasted political advertising practices of a certain political party,[36] Jerry (who occupies the opposite end of the political spectrum) recited this ditty:

> Advertising's a nasty thing
> Let's try to get them in a sting
> They only show or tell a part
> It's quite unfair and not too smart
> If Mr. Slater had a choice
> He'd ban all ads and sell by voice

So much for The Academy's last 31 years. What do they suggest about its prospects? I've noted that the three decades have served up brighter and brighter lights that for some will outshine The Academy. Business has accelerated in pace while growing in complexity. Those of us with families worry that our children confront more numerous and sinister risks. These distractions render it increasingly difficult to attend meetings or to engage in the sort of condign reflection that underlies an adequate presentation to The Academy. At times I have wondered if The Academy is a doomed anachronism. Many of our societal institutions fade. Our bonds of interconnectedness loosen. Civility declines.[37] Will the breakdown of our institutions envelop The Academy?

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number (289) by the secretary (who turned out to be Karl Falk). He pointed out that he had previously suggested that this inaccuracy be remedied. To preserve the mathematical integrity of The Academy, the president thereupon gaveled meeting number 398 to a close and immediately convened meeting number 399. Minutes of February 24 and May 19, 1986.

[36] "The Ralph Lauren Presidency," presented February 27, 1989.

[37] See Sergio Negro's paper, "The Mind and the Heart of America," presented May 16, 1988. In my own world of law, the American Law Institute is the premier elective academic body. In 1982, the percentage of the ALI's membership under 50 was 31%; in 2007 it was 10%. The percentage of members over 70, conversely, went from ten percent to 31%. "ALI Seeks Fountain of Youth," *The ALI Reporter* (Spring 2008) p. 3.

But then I consider how our group compares to that of the 1980's and 1990's. The contrast strikes me as favorable. We are polite. We are deferential. We are diverse. There is wit. We don't have nearly as many members falling asleep during presentations as we once did. In part, this is because our membership today is healthy and robust. But it may have more to do with the quality of our papers. Consider that this last year's array of Academy presentations have been very much worth hearing. Who could be more timely or provocative than Terry Amaro, weighing the virtues of organic fruits and vegetables? On election eve, Dewey Slater regaled us with the improbable story of Harry Truman's 1948 run to the presidency. Joe Capell, Steve Rodemeyer and Rick Whitten issued knowledgeable retrospectives on the Spanish Influenza of 1918, Eva Peron, and governmental incursions into medical research. I wish our 1988 membership could have heard Judy Soley's expert exposition of the causes of our current economic malaise or Pam Johnston's witty send-up of ghost hunting in America. Each of these presentations enlightened and entertained us on the issues of the day. I suspect that driving home after a meeting of The Academy most of us feel grateful that, to paraphrase Goethe, we stopped and tarried awhile.

Those splendid presentations, and the ones to come, won't get lost. Led by Nancy Key and Bob Mallek, we are well on the way to having an electronic archive of our papers at the Madden Library. Greg Powell[38] posts our presentations currently on our own web site.[39] Thanks to Howard Watkins, we

[38] His father first brought him as guest in 1986. Minutes of February 24, 1986.
[39] We might consider posting minutes of our proceedings in both locations.

even have a group picture to identify the members. Maybe a future chronicler of The Academy will be empowered to put together an accurate, post-2009 retrospective after all – one that is illustrated!

The Academy may be 74, but I like to think it is as vibrant and interesting as ever. Maybe it will survive after all. Here's to another 74 great years of The Academy!

THE ACADEMY
October 1978 to May 2009

Year	President	Location	New Members	Status Change	Members		
					Regular	Sr. Active	Honorary
1978-79	Martin Barman	Pardini's Restaurant[40]			30[41]	N/A[42]	3[43]
1979-80	Clair Nelsen		Joseph Melamed Harold Haak (Hon.) Frank V. Powell John J. McGregor	Perez Simmons (R)[44] Kenneth T. Craycroft (Sr.) Vern C. Redman (Sr.) Norman Baxter (R) Robert Nicolaysen (R) Leon S. Peters (Sr.)	30	0	3
1980-81	Roger Coryell		Hollis Best Clement Renzi	Lowell Firstenberger (R)	28	3	3
1981-82	Robert Miner		Douglas B. Jensen		30	2	3

[40] Located at 2257 W. Shaw Avenue.
[41] All membership counts are as of the first meeting of the year (formerly October, now September). In October 1978 the regular members were Edward F. Ackley, C. R. Antrim, Martin Barman, Keith G. Baxter, Gerald Blum, William Boggs, José Canales, Howard F. Corbus, Roger Coryell, Kenneth T. Craycroft, José Elgorriaga, Byron Evans, Karl Falk, Lowell Firstenberger, Don A. Fortune, Max M. Hayden, James Henderson, Kendall Holmes, Kendall Manock, Clyde McCully, Robert Miner, Sergio P. Negro, Clair Nelsen, Robert Nicolaysen, Leon S. Peters, Walter Puhn, Stewart D. Randall, Vern C. Redman, Robert Revilla, Jr., and H. Roger Tatarian.
[42] The Senior Active category was created in April 1979.
[43] In October 1978, the Honorary Members were Perez Simmons, David Greenberg and Norman Baxter.
[44] Key: (R) = resigned. (T) = terminated for lack of attendance. (∞) = deceased.

Year	President	Location	New Members	Status Change	Members		
					Regular	Sr. Active	Honorary
1982-83	Keith G. Baxter		Terril A. Efird	Kendall Holmes (R) Walter Puhn (Sr.) Vern C. Redman (∞) José Elgorriaga (R) Howard F. Corbus (R) Kenneth T. Craycroft (R)	31(!)	1	3
1983-84	Frank V. Powell	Tropicana Inn (10/83)[45]	Louis C. ("Dewey") Slater James Aldredge	Don A. Fortune (T) Leon S. Peters (∞) José Canales (T) C. R. Antrim (R)	28	2	2
1984-85	Clyde McCully	Knock Three Times (10/84)[46]	Bud Long John S. Bakas José Canales (Sr.) Carl L. Pherson	Roger Coryell (R) Max M. Hayden (Sr.)	28	1	2
1985-86	John J. McGregor	Reuben's (11/85)[47]	James P. Canales John Raytis	James Henderson (R) Byron Evans (Sr.)	28	3	2
1986-87	Terril A. Efird		Daniel Dooley	Martin Barman (R) John Raytis (R) Stewart D. Randall (R)	28	4	2

[45] Located at 4061 N. Blackstone Avenue.
[46] The former Pardini's Restaurant, under new ownership and renamed.
[47] Located in Fresno Fashion Fair as a free-standing building along Shaw Avenue. During most (if not all) years 1986-1990, the May meeting was held at The Downtown Club instead of at Rueben's because the latter's private meeting room was too small to hold the members and their guests. Rueben's was later razed and replaced by a bank branch office.

Year	President	Location	New Members	Status Change	Members		
					Regular	Sr. Active	Honorary
1987-88	Douglas B. Jensen		Bruce Spaulding Judith Leslie Soley Dennis Gaab	Robert Miner (R) Robert Revilla (R) William Boggs (R) Bruce Spaulding (R)	26	4	2
1988-89	Louis C. ("Dewey") Slater		Beverly Kees Mary A. Ludwig Ara (“Corky”) Normart	Dennis Gaab (R) Keith G. Baxter (R) Karl Falk (∞)	26	4	2
1989-90	Bud Long		Robert Barrett	Robert Barrett (R) Joseph Melamed (R)	24	4	2
1990-91	Carl L. Pherson	D’Mils (10/90)[48]	José Elgorriaga Michael Gorman Patricia Ann Haun Paula Salwasser	James Aldredge (R)	24	4	2
1991-92	Daniel Dooley		John Welty (Hon.)	Harold Haak (Reg.)	27	4	2
1992-93	Beverly Kees	Pacific Seafood (10/92)[49]	Ralph E. Waterhouse	Edward F. Ackley (Sr.)	28	4	2

[48] The former Borelli’s Restaurant, located in Fig Garden Village. D'Mils was situated northerly of the site of the current Starbuck’s along Shaw Avenue. Due to scheduling problems, the November and December 1990 meetings returned to Rueben’s.

[49] Located near southeast corner of Herndon Avenue and First Street. During our years at Pacific Seafood, May meetings were again held at The Downtown Club because Pacific Seafood's private meeting room would not have accommodated members and their guests.

Year	President	Location	New Members	Status Change	Members		
					Regular	Sr. Active	Honorary
1993-94	Judith Leslie Soley	Pardini's Grill (3/94)	Alexander Gonzalez	Beverly Kees (R) Harold Haak (R) Byron Evans (Hon.) Walter Puhn (Hon.) Daniel Dooley (R) Hollis Best (Hon.) Ara ("Corky") Normart (T) David Greenberg (∞)	28	5	2
1994-95	Michael Gorman		Richard H. Whitten, Jr. Arthur Dyson Nancy Mellor Luis F. Costa Kendall Holmes (Sr.)	John S. Bakas (R)	27	3	4
1995-96	José Elgorriaga		Robert L. Wiebe Ginger Lozano Douglas J. Rumford J.D. Northway Richard Johansen	H. Roger Tatarian (∞) Hollis Best (R) Clair Nelsen (∞) José Canales (Hon.)	25	3	4
1996-97	Mary A. Ludwig		Tony Correia	Paula Salwasser (R) Clyde McCully (R) Bud Long (T) Kendall L. Manock (T) Richard Johansen (R)	30	3	4

Year	President	Location	New Members	Status Change	Members		
					Regular	Sr. Active	Honorary
1997-98	Patricia Ann Haun (to 8/97); Richard H. Whitten, Jr.		Joseph T. Capell Stephen R. Stephenson	Patricia Ann Haun (R) Alexander Gonzalez (R) Clement Renzi (Sr.) Walter Puhn (∞)	24	3	4
1998-99	Douglas J. Rumford		Vernon M. Crowder Ronald D. Eichman Robert J. Cardinal Ellen Gruenbaum	Ginger Lozano (R) Michael Gorman (R) Sergio P. Negro(∞)	25	4	3
1999-2000	Ralph E. Waterhouse		Melvin Enns Dennis Wm. Johnson	James P. Canales (R) José Canales (R) Arthur Dyson (T) Byron Evans(R) Edward F. Ackley (R)	26	3	2
2000-01	Tony Correia		Gary W. Sawyers James S. Howard	Douglas J. Rumford (R) Ralph E. Waterhouse (R) Max M. Hayden (Hon.) José Elgorriaga (Sr.) Mary A. Ludwig (∞)	26	3	1
2001-02	Luis F. Costa		Sergio Aguilar-Gaxiola Charles R. "(Rick") Hutchinson, Jr. Bruce S. Thornton	Robert J. Cardinal (R)	24	3	2

Year	President	Location	New Members	Status Change	Members		
					Regular	Sr. Active	Honorary
2002-03	Ronald D. Eichman	Bistro 1540 (9/02)[50]	Patricia Ann Haun Perry J. Kavookjian F. Thomas Biglione	Stephen R. Stephenson (R) Perry J. Kavookjian (R)	28	3	2
2003-04	Ellen Gruenbaum		Terry Amaro Paul Pierce	Max M. Hayden (∞) Gerald Blum (Sr.) Kendall Holmes (∞)	29	3	2
2004-05	Vernon M. Crowder	Love & Garlic (9/04)[51]	Arthur Dyson Sue Moore Fenske Nancy Anne Key	Tony Correia (R) Nancy Mellor (R) Luis F. Costa (R) Frank V. Powell (Sr.) James S. Howard (R)	27	3	1
2005-06	Melvin Enns	The Downtown Club (11/05)[52]	Gregory S. Powell Kevin J. Castanos Blair R. Richardson Jeronima Echeverria (Hon.) Hilary Chittick Paula J. Landis	Carl L. Pherson (R) Gary W. Sawyers (R) Patricia Ann Haun (R) Sergio Aguilar-Gaxiola (T) Kevin J. Castanos (R)	24	4	1

[50] Located on the California State University, Fresno campus near the student union. The only convenient parking was on the University campus. The University jealously guarded its parking facilities, even at night. So each month, someone had to obtain parking passes, each good only for the night of the meeting, from the University. Members who forgot their passes got costly parking tickets from the University gendarmes.

[51] Located in the Elks' Lodge at 5351 N. Diana Court, south of Barstow Avenue.

[52] Located at 2120 Kern Street.

Year	President	Location	New Members	Status Change	Members		
					Regular	Sr. Active	Honorary
2006-07	Charles R. ("Rick") Hutchinson, Jr.		Terri M. Pieretti Robert A. Mallek, Jr.	José Elgorriaga (Hon.) Sue Moore Fenske (R) Blair R. Richardson (R) Bruce S. Thornton (R)	26	3	3
2007-08	F. Thomas Biglione		Stephen A. Rodemeyer Pamela D. Johnston Thomas Williams	Dennis Wm. Johnson (R) J.D. Northway (Sr.) Terri M. Pieretti (R) Ellen Gruenbaum (R)	25	3	3
2008-09	Terry Amaro		Scott Hatfield Howard K. Watkins Honora M. H. Chapman Ann Vermel	Jeronima Echeverria (R) Clement Renzi (R) Robert L. Wiebe (R)	24	4	3