



## San Francisco Westerners International Signals for December 2016

WEBSITE: [www.westernerssf.org](http://www.westernerssf.org)

EMAIL: [westernerssf@gmail.com](mailto:westernerssf@gmail.com)

The Westerners are fortunate to have Bruce Castleman as our **December 6, 2016** speaker. Please join us at 5:30 PM to enjoy this wonderful presentation. Bruce Castleman will discuss Commodore Sloat's impact on the history of California. Bruce is the well-known author of *Knickerbocker Commodore: The Life and Times of John Drake Sloat, 1781-1867*.

*Knickerbocker Commodore* chronicles the life of Rear Admiral John Drake Sloat, an important but understudied naval figure in US history. Born and raised by a slave-owning gentry family in New York's Hudson Valley, Sloat moved to New York City at age nineteen. Bruce A. Castleman explores in his book Sloat's forty-five-year career in the Navy, from his initial appointment as midshipman in the conflicts with revolutionary France to his service as commodore during the country's war with Mexico. As the commodore in command of the naval forces in the Pacific, Sloat occupied Monterey and declared the annexation of California in July 1846, controversial actions criticized by some and defended by others. More than a biography of one man, this book illustrates the evolution of the peacetime Navy as an institution and its conversion from sail to steam. Using shipping news and Customs Service records from Sloat's merchant voyages, Castleman offers a rare and insightful perspective on American maritime history.

**Bruce A. Castleman** served in the US Navy for twenty-four years and held the rank of Commander at the time of his retirement. He then trained as a historian and lectured in history at San Diego State University. He is the author of *Building the King's Highway: Labor, Society, and Family on Mexico's Caminos Reales, 1757-1804*. Bruce Castleman calls San Francisco home but he hails from Sacramento and grew up with family in every town from Redwood City to Oroville. He graduated from the Naval Academy and served a career in the United States Navy, mostly running engineering departments. When he retired from the Navy, he next turned to his lifelong interest in history and went to graduate school where he earned a doctorate from the University of California at Riverside. Bruce then taught history at San Diego State for several years, but he and Penny had always meant to come back to where they met and married. His earlier research was on Latin American topics, but he discovered the controversies surrounding Commodore John Drake Sloat in 1846. Mexican California and the U.S. Navy intersected with Bruce's interests, and he thought he had a local topic with local sources. Commodore Sloat turned out to be a New Yorker through and through, as Castleman found out while researching for his new book, *Knickerbocker Commodore: The Life and Times of John Drake Sloat, 1781-1867* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2016)..

**Location:** L'Oliver French Restaurant  
465 Davis Court, San Francisco

The restaurant provides us with a private room, fine dining and an attentive staff. A no-host full bar is available. L'Oliver is located between Jackson and Washington Streets. Parking is available in the area. We gather at 5:30 and dinner seating begins at 6:15 P.M. A three course selection is available and costs \$38.00. Please send checks and dinner reservations by November 29, 2016 to: Judy Van Austen, KOC, 1789 Northwood Court, Oakland, CA 94611

Current Posse:  
Sheriff: Robert Chandler, PhD  
Trail Boss: [Ask how you can help us here!](#)  
Registrar of Marks & Brands: [We also need help here!](#)  
Keeper of the Chips: Judy Van Austen (510-339-1298)  
International Rep: Gerhard Brostrom  
Marshall: Bob Lawhon (415-519-3972)  
Inkslinger: Tom McLaughlin (415-931-1598)  
Inkslingers Emeritus: Richard F. Olson; Mary Lou Lyon, HM

Other items and events of interest:

**Congratulations to Rose Marie Beebe and Robert Senkewicz...they were awarded 2<sup>nd</sup> place for the Westerners International 2015 CoFounders "Best Book" Award for their book: *Junipero Serra: California, Indians, and the Transformation of a Missionary*. The awards were presented at the Westerners Reception during the Western History Association Conference in Saint Paul, Minnesota, October 20. Rosemarie and Robert gave our group a presentation on their book last March.**

**Betsy Bogel, our long-time member, would like a ride to the Westerners as she no longer drives. Please contact her at 650-345-4243. Her address is 500 Almer Rd., #103, Burlingame, Ca 94010.**

We were saddened to learn of the passing of Norm Tutorow on September 2<sup>nd</sup>. Norm was the author of the important two volume history of Leland Stanford, *The Life and Legacy of Leland Stanford, A California Colossus*.

**JACK LONDON- A CALIFORNIA RADICAL- A Panel Discussion on Wednesday, November 16, 2016 - 6:30pm**

**at the Mechanic's Institute, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor (members free/others \$15)**

This tribute to one of the Bay Area's most iconic celebrity writers will be moderated by Heyday founder Malcolm Margolin and will include authors Jonah Raskin (*The Radical Jack London: Writings on War and Revolution*) and Gerald Haslam (*Jack London's Golden State: Selected California Writings*), science writer Mary Ellen Hannibal (*Citizen Scientist*), California Director of the National Wildlife Federation Beth Pratt-Bergstrom (*When Mountain Lions are Neighbors*), Heyday's Steve Wasserman, and special guest librarian Tarnel Abbott, great granddaughter of Jack London.

The panel will cover London's fiery personality and the radical themes of his writing including his views on socialism, war and revolution, unions, incarceration, environmental issues, as well as his ideas about "man vs nature" that he is noted for.

**San Francisco's beloved older buildings aren't simply treasures to be preserved, they're lenses through which we can view how this city and its cultures continue to evolve. Join [the Book Club of California and John King on November 14, 2016 from 5-7 PM](#) for an eye-opening look at what the landmarks around us reveal about where we might be going next, and how our treatment of the past can alter San Francisco's future. John King is the *San Francisco Chronicle's* urban design critic, where he casts his sharp eye on everything from the design of major towers to the value of rooftop public spaces.**

**The Annual Meeting and Holiday Luncheon of the Contra Costa County Historical Society will be held at the Diablo Country Club on December 3 at 11:00 AM until 2:00 PM. If you wish to make donations or make reservations, please contact Tara Weber at 510-501-0342 or at [www.cocohistory.com](http://www.cocohistory.com).**