



Local Treasure Trove


UC SANTA BARBARA'S SPECIAL RESEARCH COLLECTIONS AND THE INTELLECTUAL OUTING OF A BEACH TOWN

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Curators of the Lost Arts - inside UCSB's
Special Research Collection archives



Beautiful places become loci for culture. Democracy found its feet in Greece, its nadir in Siberia – just as a fr’instance. After a day of obtuse jibber-jabber, even beard-tugging Aristotelians are known to favor a lawn chair and strawberry daiquiri at water’s edge. So it is that Santa Barbara’s stupendous beauty has long drawn culture-stirring avatars from near and far, over time infusing our town with a largely unsung socio-historical heft belied by that surfeit of sand, sun, and sandal/sock combinations that suggest a mere tourist vortex. Blessed by what can only be called tectonic good fortune, the fair city of Santa Barbara spills from foothill to shoreline like the politely flung contents of a jewelry box, “nestled” (as is often said) between a picturesque lil’ mountain range and the sparkling, self-congratulating immensity of the Pacific. Our town’s jaw-droppingly lovely setting has earned her the sort of global reputation lesser towns (to be frank) can only envy from afar.

But like a runway model with a poorly matched glass eye and secret life as a String Theorist, SB is also a whiplash contradiction. This globally famous waterfront idyll boasts a namesake academy that perennially ranks as one of the *world’s* top research universities. Seaside, bluff-top UC Santa Barbara is indeed a unique institution of higher learning, perfect surf breaks complementing a faculty liberally seasoned with clanking, medal-wearing Nobel laureates. Despite the fact that Santa Barbara’s secret history as an intellectual maypole preceded the establishment of her renowned university, “Santa Barbara has gravitas!” remains a seldom-shouted exclamation. Danelle Moon, local history collections curator of UCSB’s Special Research Collections, may have a thing or two to say about that: “We have *amazing* collections and we pride ourselves on making these collections accessible for world-wide discovery.”

Every family secret obliges a dead-bolted room at the top of a darkened stair – so to speak. Santa Barbara’s musty, secret-stuffed annex is (naturally) a glorious, sun-splashed edifice of glass and steel in the approximate center of the shamelessly picturesque UCSB campus. Its Special Research Collections could be called the pulsing dynamo whose energies both derive from and continually nourish our deceptively button-down beach town. Packed with brow-furrowing, eye-widening surprises guaranteed to flip the wig of the most hardened University Archives Enthusiast® (a species reportedly on the rise), this Special Research Collections is an exactly curated and punctiliously organized treasure trove. Let’s all thank Danelle.

Danelle

UCSB's Danelle Moon has been director of the Special Research Collections since 2015. The conversation takes place in the sort of room one is accustomed to seeing in art heist movies – temperature-controlled and high-ceilinged. The walls, though, feature the expansive floor-to-ceiling windows art thieves abjure. Tastefully muted California daylight pours in to illuminate what is, after all, a reading room; one which neatly doubles as a venue for campus events, lectures, and other chatty academic soirées.

Moon – who previously managed archives at San José State University and Yale – works alongside 17 full-time staff members whose number include a rare book cataloger, an archival processing unit, and seven curators – there is to date no partridge in a pear tree. Staff responsibilities run the necessary gamut – from charming and cajoling folks into donating their historically potent treasures, to purchasing items for the collection from such

civilization-rescuing monks as Montecito rare book dealer Jerry Jacobs of Lost Horizon Bookstore – and many others in a regional network of stealthy archivists. Moon is a widely respected, deeply informed, and wonderfully deliberative gatekeeper.

Special Collections: The Understatement

“Special collection” as a term does not raise the heart rate. It is instructive to recall, though, that Indiana Jones’ anxious efforts ended in the Ark of the Covenant (yes, that one) being wheeled by a bored civil servant into the anonymous recesses of a government document hangar. In the same way (approximately), UCSB’s Special Collections *nom de la paix* is surely a cover for this wonder-stuffed repository. Twenty years in the planning, the modern glass-and-steel addendum to UCSB’s Library opened with some fanfare in 2016 amid speeches,



Even-keeled and omni-directional,
Danelle Moon curates with panache

interpretive dances, and Chancellor Henry Yang cutting through a blue-and-gold banner with the largish ceremonial scissors these occasions oblige. UCSB's Special Research Collections is today home to a cornucopia of rare documents and eye-opening curated materials of which the general public is largely unaware. Or unawares.

The private lives of public individuals – both their creative and personal aspects – are deep experiential wells to be respected and culturally plumbed. UCSB's trove of personally revealing papers and *objets de curiosités* ranges from amiable local legacy to the more jarring and obscure. This is a collection that includes early contraceptives from (yes) the Marie Carmichael Stopes Birth Control Collection. Stopes was a lesser-known contemporary of early 20th-century birth control avatar Margaret Sanger. Her cache of early day contraceptive devices – and the cultural incandescence that attaches to such objects – provides a timely example of how a collection's variousness gives it a kind of cyclical gravity. Such objects are fascinating-but-anodyne curiosa – until such time as they attach to suddenly relevant and volatile public conversations. Danelle Moon's brilliant and illuminated curation boasts this deliberate interdisciplinary diversity – one whose increasing depth and breadth speak to both the mad variety of history's jetsam, and the gasoline such objects periodically throw on the public square's ever-growing bonfire of conversation and dissent.

How many individual items comprise the archives? The question may not be reasonable, but is worth a try. "We don't really have a count of the individual items," Moon replies evenly. It's just possible she was prepared for every query but this one. It seems fair to suppose there is more here than anyone would have the patience, or the mortal runway, to comb through in a lifetime. To switch briefly to a layperson's gee-whiz, the place is chock full of crazily fascinating stuff. There are the early contraceptive devices that make the Dalkon Shield look positively demure, Civil War muskets, and an 1859 *first edition* of Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* – the 162-year-old book's fitness and survivability soundly illustrating its own central hypothesis. How did these rarities come to rest in UCSB's archives?

Moon spells it out. "It's a long process initiated most often by forming relationships with people and learning about what they actually possess," she explains. It develops that many people aren't necessarily ready or willing to part with their babies at the conversation's outset. Most items *are* donations, though, which is a good thing. The collections' budgetary bandwidth is...limited. Ultimately, some of the items are hybrids; part donation and part purchase – an acquisitive gumbo that illustrates the never-say-never

inventiveness of UCSB's development office. (Those considering a donation might be interested to learn there is a *tax write-off* for appraised value of accepted items; though the IRS's kindness doesn't apply to self-created works. That is, while a donor can write off the appraised value of a box full of historically significant correspondence, a donor cannot appraise and write off her own brilliantly executed, 700-pound modernist aluminum mobile.)



Lou Cannon holds court in his book-jammed Summerland nerve center (home)

Lou's Canon

Lou Cannon – feted presidential biographer, former state bureau chief for the *San Jose Mercury News*, former White House correspondent for the *Washington Post*, and current Summerland habitué – has devoted his writing life to explaining the inexplicable; to politics, that is. Most of Cannon's

celebrated reportorial energies have been spent plumbing the political id of one Ronald Reagan. Cannon's Reagan studies are a critically and popularly revered body of granular revelation whose “no stone unturned” ethos makes these volumes famously immersive reads. Prizes, you ask? Yep. Cannon took home the White House Correspondents Association's Aldo Beckman Award (1984) for overall excellence in presidential coverage,

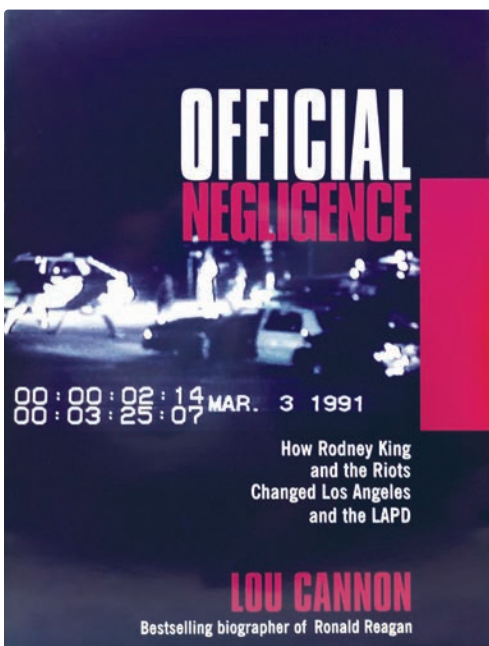


and was the inaugural recipient of the Gerald R. Ford Prize (1988) for his reporting on the Nixon, Ford, and Reagan administrations – a worryingly piquant stretch of our republic's over-caffeinated political history.

Cannon also published, in 1997, what many consider the defining volume on the bloody Rodney King conflagration – *Official Negligence: How Rodney King and the Riots Changed Los Angeles and the LAPD*. More recently, the celebrated biographer and



Cannon's publicly edifying contributions to journalism and biography have earned him a number of awards



Interrogation at 36,000 feet: Cannon ambles up from coach to corner the President. Reagan's amiable note reads "Are you asking the questions or am I?"

historian made his voluminous Rodney King and Ronald Reagan papers available to UCSB's Special Research Collections – a handoff comprising 70 cartons, nine document boxes, and 248 audiocassettes. These numbers merely hint at the vaunted thoroughness of Mr. Cannon's research.

During a visit with Cannon at his bursting-with-papers Summerland home, the obvious question was asked: "Why not donate or sell your Reagan materials to the Reagan Library?" He'd made the decision to archive his materials at UCSB for a

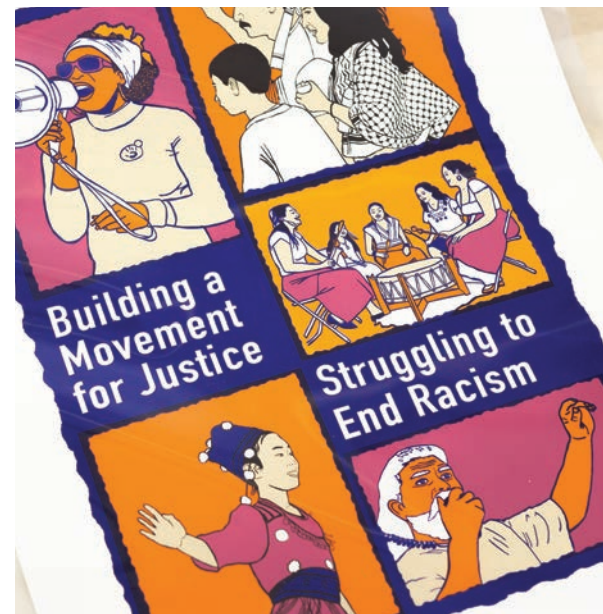


"August 1985 at Reagan's annual event for the press in Santa Barbara. He didn't host it at his own ranch, but at another ranch that was more accessible, often Fess Parker's," says Cannon of an image with Mary and Reagan. "Reagan was jumping the gun just a little in signing it to the two of us – we were married in September."

Every, came through with another substantial contribution, and with that we were very close to the total. I'm so very grateful to Sara and Pat. I hate fundraising." One component of the Reagan papers arrangement was that Cannon would then donate the Rodney King archive from his *Official Negligence* book as well. To our common good fortune he did exactly that.

Vintners. LGBTQIA+. Wax Cylinders. Vampires.

UCSB's Special Research Collections is both eccentric and scholarly. This is not an easy balance to strike, and recommends the place to a public unfamiliar with the joys of mixed arcana. There are the Santa Barbara vintner records, for example. UC Davis (thanks to its viticulture curriculum) has the most prominent collection, UCSB trailing closely behind with raised glass and an uncertain gait.



All manner of African American, Asian and Pacific American, Chicano and Latino, and Native American pieces comprise the California Multi-Ethnic Archives, one of Special Collections' most heavily utilized research destinations



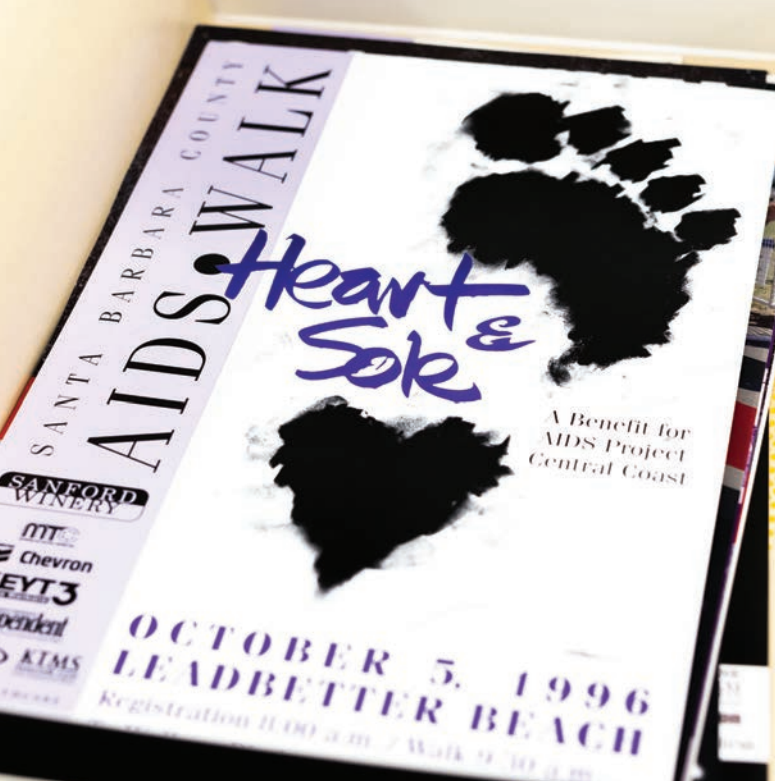
Where is the Secret Service? Gang of award-winning scribes – Cannon, David Hoffman, and David Broder – close in on the Chief Executive George H.W. Bush

number of reasons. Cannon – a verified giant in the culture's biography section – cut a decidedly Earthbound figure during the visit, padding around in his stocking feet, his book-filled downstairs study the very picture of a research fiend's paper-and-glue jammed nerve center, where Cannon's wife/memory bank/archivist of 30 years, Mary, often works alongside him. At present, Cannon is toiling away on his memoir and is literally knee-deep in research: "I'm on the Gorbachev-Reagan period now," he notes. Yes, Cannon's gravity is such that the man has a Gorbachev-Reagan period.

While writing his first book on Reagan in 1968, Cannon had visited the Reagan Library to view the Gipper's film archives. What he found instead was a familiar disappointment. The revenue-obsessed movie studios had sold Reagan's films to the highest bidder "without much thought," Cannon says quite reasonably.

Reagan's film oeuvre had been snapped up by a faraway branch of the University of Wisconsin (Madison) – whose location handily stymies both the wing-tipped D.C. politico/researcher AND the tastefully tattooed Los Angeles-based film historian; a genuinely bicoastal inconvenience. The studios' transactional glibness had a useful effect on Cannon. "I wanted to make sure that my archives are accessible for whoever wants to examine them," said the 88-year-old. Specifically, Cannon wanted his Reagan collection to be close to the Gipper's namesake Simi Valley Presidential Library. He further felt that UCSB "made sense," since he has worked for years in the Santa Barbara area. Cannon also has a long association with UCSB that includes his having received the Raznick Letters and Science Distinguished Scholar Award for the spring quarter of 1995, his having given a number of notable speeches at the university throughout the years, and his having delivered a commencement address on June 18, 1995, at the invitation of Chancellor Yang. Cannon and his wife have been friends with Henry and Dilling Yang for decades.

Moon's expert Cannon-coaxing didn't hurt, either. UCSB indeed expressed interest in purchasing the Reagan papers for a stipulated amount, adding that they would need to raise the money to do so. Cannon knows his way around biographical majesty and applying instructive coherence to the quicksilver vagaries of history. Fundraising is another matter. "I asked Sara [Miller McCune] for advice on how to do that," Cannon says. "In response, she made a large contribution. Another friend, the late Pat Van



The vintner cache includes rare wine labels, articles, clippings, and other ephemera related to the area's overweening success with the sour grape. If that doesn't fill your Riedel, there's a goldmine of uber-rare antique wax cylinder recordings in the music holdings, vast archives on the Chicano movement, and the papers of influential film composer and Hitchcock co-conspirator Bernard Herrmann – he whose shrieking violins set the post-*Psycho* shower curtain trade back at least a decade.

The collection's artifacts can come from anywhere. A rare early 20th century Carpinteria newspaper produced in both English and Spanish – "...a really amazing thing!" Moon exclaims – came to the collection's attention courtesy of Dr.

(Left) Pacific Pride Foundation records document the activities of the groundbreaking Santa Barbara organization from its 1976 founding forward. (Below) United Farm Workers' landscape-changing pushback is well-represented in Special Collections, with a range of historic ephemera.





Jim Campos. “It was found in someone’s attic in Carpinteria,” Moon says avidly, her dedication clearly augmented by the occasional giddy revelations of domestic junk-diving. “It was the only liberal, progressive newspaper in Santa Barbara County at the time.”

UCSB is one of the few campuses whose deep Chicano movement materials are regularly accessed by scholars. “We have a very large California Multi-Ethnic Archives that largely documents the Chicano artist movement, Self-Help Graphics, and El Teatro Campesino,” Moon says. She adds that the collections’ Pacific Pride Foundation, LGBTQIA+, and Asian archives are also widely respected destination resources for researchers.

(Top) GOO (Get Oil Out!) was formed in the wake of the devastating Santa Barbara Oil Spill of 1969, which arguably launched the modern environmental movement. (Bottom) A gorgeously illuminated Italian Book of Prayer dates to the very early 15th century, likely sometime before “Columbus sailed the ocean blue.”



The archive's diversity also includes a vast survey of religious collectibles reaching from the ancient to the modern. The Medieval Bible collection contains beautifully preserved, lavishly illustrated scripture, as well as a 14th-century illuminated book of prayers purchased by the once incredibly fruitful and now-defunct Friends of the Library. "The book of prayers," Moon says with a trace of resignation, "is also the 1,000,000th book donated by the former Friends of the Library." Perhaps it's fitting that sources can be as evanescent as history itself. Soon to be added to this collection – which includes archives on Mormonism, yogis, astrology, and Wiccans – is a large stash of vampire lore that Moon discovered in Los Angeles, courtesy of two librarians at USC. Were the two contributors pale and nocturnal appearing? "That will be a hot collection!" Moon says delightedly. It is heartening to know that the Ivory Tower® can still make accommodations for vampires.

Ann of a Thousand Ways

Renowned investigative polymath Ann Louise Bardach (aka A.L. Bardach) is a reporter like Neil Armstrong is a plucky flyboy. One could be excused for thinking her crowded portfolio a mistaken gathering of unrelated scribes, so varied has been her decade-spanning journalistic yen. Her work has Sid Vicious rubbing shoulders with Fidel Castro, for instance. "Annie" (as familiars call her) has been all over the place in a career driven by curiosity and acclaimed investigative chops. She has written for *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, POLITICO, *The Wall Street Journal's* magazine, *Los Angeles Times*, *The New Yorker*, *The Atlantic*, Slate, *The Guardian*, *Financial Times*, *The New Republic*, *Newsweek*, and *The Daily*



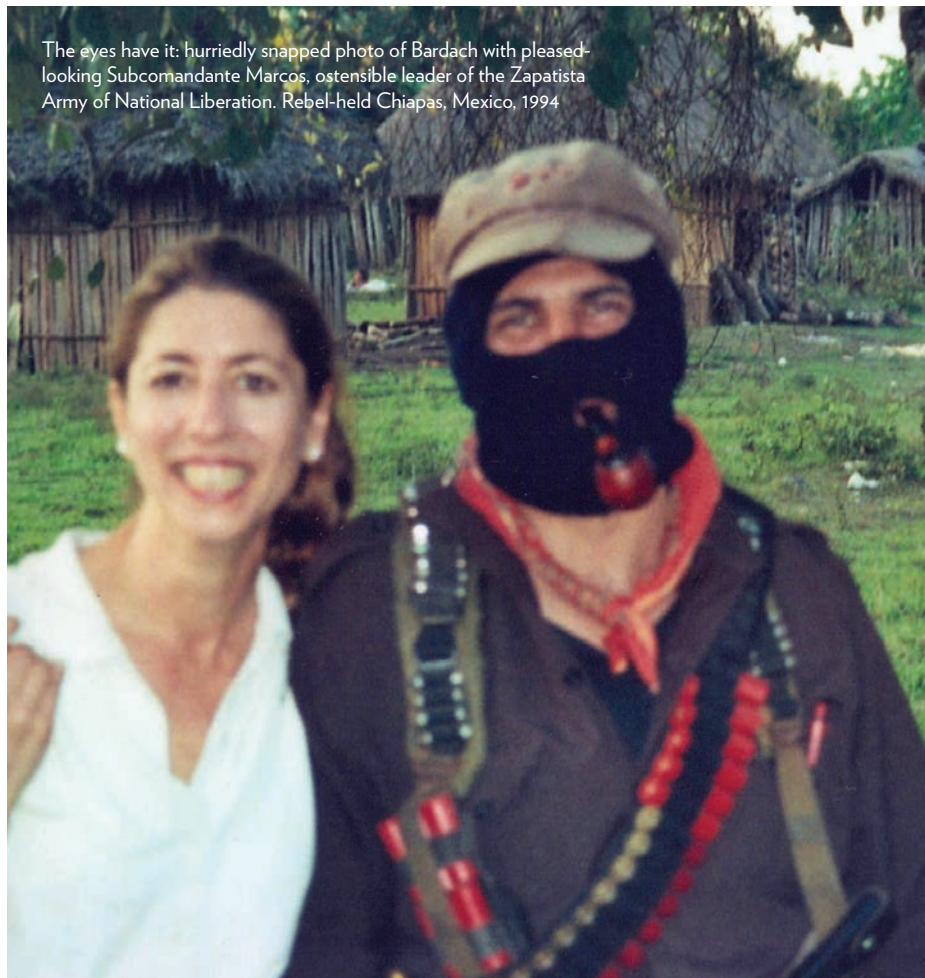
Bardach and Cannon: truth-telling birds of a feather flock together in Special Research Collections



A.L. Bardach's history-making Cuba reportage would lift the veil on Fidel's revolutionary statesmanship. To his clear delight.

Beast. She was a *Vanity Fair* contributing editor for a decade, right around the time *VF* was arguably hitting its indescribable peak – the mag's branded parfait of high society and scarifying subterfuge playing to Bardach's subtle skill at unpacking the juxtapositions that illuminate the world's weirder precincts.

But it's her decades of pugnacious immersion in all things Havana/Miami (the Two Cubas) – her access to Fidel Castro (and his many enemies, including the presidents and leaders of Mexico, Pakistan, Morocco, and a clutch of other history-makers), her reporting on the relentlessly creative anti-Castro movement, her hard-won appreciation from the movement's warring factions, and her incomparable sense of the place and its indomitable people – that have seen Bardach unofficially coronated as the Western journalist best suited to sing the benighted island nation's complex paean. Or as the *Columbia Journalism Review* put it, "[Bardach is] the go-to journalist on all things Cuban and Miami."



The eyes have it: hurriedly snapped photo of Bardach with pleased-looking Subcomandante Marcos, ostensible leader of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation. Rebel-held Chiapas, Mexico, 1994

Dear Anne,

I love your card! I guess
 it was the Imperial Indian ELEPHANT
 completely royally rigged out in the
 PASHA's best, strolling through
 a glitter-fall. Hard to top that!

Meantime, the world is counting
 on you for definitive coverage on Cuba.
 You are the only journalist we have
 who actually KNOWS the place. At
 the same time you have GOT to cover
 the ELECTION, which is getting MONDO
 WACKY
 You are the only scribe who
 knows how to cut through to the
 machinery and the WIZARD who runs it.

Don't you love people
 who dream up things for
 YOU to do?

Yours,
 Tom

TOM WOLFE
 21 EAST 70th ST
 NEW YORK NY
 MARCH 20
 2016

“I recently gave the original of this letter (with the envelope) to those incredibly brilliant UCSB librarians Kristin, Lidia, Danelle. I mention this as Tom Wolfe, the father of New Journalism, sold his letters and papers to the New York City Library for \$2.8 million before he died. This letter was sent to me in the run-up of the 2016 election, and is one of the loveliest I received – not to mention his astonishing calligraphy.”

– A.L. Bardach

It was Lou Cannon's suggestion that prompted his friend Annie to likewise house her papers in the Special Research Collections. Her having founded UCSB's international journalism class – and her longtime Resident Scholar role at the university's Orfalea Center – would seem to make the Gauchos Special Collections a natural for Bardach's papers. She is also on the board of UCSB's Carsey-Wolf Center and PEN Center USA.

Bardach is still poring over a lifetime's worth of typescript in her Carpinteria home office, where photos of Sid Vicious, Subcomandante Marcos, Johnny Rotten, William Burroughs, New Journalism founder Tom Wolfe, critic Kenneth Tynan, and Fidel Castro make incongruous shelf-fellows.

"They took 65 boxes!" she says with something like wonder, and eyes boxes yet to make the move. Here and there in the denuded-looking office a few boxes remain. "See this?" she says brightly, gesturing. Her accent is Rapid-Fire East Coast. "It's a box of tapes and transcripts of my interviews with the Cotton Club murderers! What a crowd they were! The library did a magnificent job. My view is that Lou [Cannon] makes great company and I'm honored to share a few shelves with him." Bardach describes the effect on her self-regard of watching her life's work disappear into academia's version of cold storage – then laughing, says, "I feel like I'm dead or something!" Surrounded by the gold-plated flotsam of a storied career that has yet to decelerate, she reaches down and produces an old issue of the original *WET Magazine*. As journalists will, we jump to the masthead and find her interview with occultist auteur Kenneth Anger. To say that Bardach's career has been a "journey" is a ringing understatement.

Her kaleidoscopic archives reflect the early energized general assignment reporter whose high-octane curiosity laid the groundwork. She has spent a peripatetic investigative career unearthing paradigm-tweaking truths and dragging them into daylight. UCSB Library's Special Research Collections thus has her award-winning Castro and Cuba books cheek-by-jowl with reporting on the early New York punk scene, the JonBenét Ramsey murder, Sex Pistols' self-taught bassist/bad boyfriend Sid Vicious, Watergate Plumber and Bay of Pigs architect E. Howard Hunt, early Manson murderer Bobby Beausoleil, New Wave chanteuse Deborah Harry, and much, much more. Bardach is now unencumbered, to our common benefit. Minutiae notwithstanding. "I thought I got rid of everything, but it keeps multiplying. What do I do with the 30 years of letters from dead lovers and fights with my mother?" she wonders aloud. "Write your memoir," is one suggestion. She has both the material and anecdotal moxie any reader would devour. We learn, for instance, that as a young, aspiring reporter Bardach would hang out in the

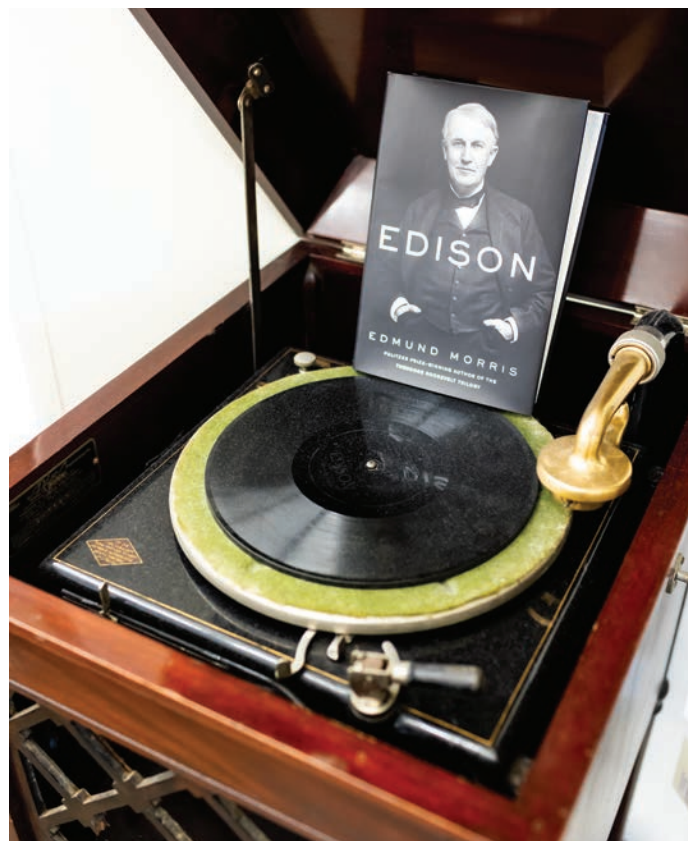
third basement of NYC's Bellevue Hospital morgue, tossing back nightcaps with the coroner – NOT a happening spot in 1970s – in hopes of scooping one of the Big Apple's other "10,000 reporters" when "an interesting body would come in. You never know! I was there when Gig Young and his wife (a murder/suicide) were rolled in. And of course, Sid Vicious' gal. So it sort of worked out."

Granted, it is a strange sensation to go through one's lifetime of work with the goal of gifting, selling, recycling, or dumping it. Can we call this a sort of end-of-the-road karmic dance? Let's do.

Many-Splendored

Moon is currently working with a family in possession of a large collection of Agustín Barrios – the Paraguayan classical guitarist and contemporary of Andrés Segovia. One gets the impression her work life is a series of "work with families."

Closer to home, UCSB's beloved and history-reflecting campus radio station KCSB is having its audio archives digitized – "We are looking for grant funding for that," Moon says – and the American Radio Archives, a renowned collection of historically



Edison's stubbornly cool Model A-100 (1915-1918) played only "diamond" discs; a fragile wood-core format that defied modern digitization. Now UCSB's American Discography Project (ADP) will preserve some 9,000 of these nearly lost recordings. (Allen G. Debus Collection)

weighty radio broadcasts, will also become part of Special Collections in 2021, thanks to the Thousand Oaks Library Foundation (TOLF) who established the radio archive in 1984.

Special Collections' riches are stored and easily accessed in the aforementioned modernist temple on the UCSB campus, but parts of the collection reside nearly 100 miles away at UCLA. Appointments to review materials – available to scholars, students, professors, film and television researchers, playwrights, and others – can be made online.

Many rare first and signed editions of major American and British authors – with emphasis on 19th and 20th century literature – are available to peruse. These include works by cautionary novelist Aldous Huxley, father of poetic modernism T.S. Eliot, American icon Robert Frost, Henry James, avatar of environmental verse Robinson Jeffers, D.H. Lawrence, censorship magnet Henry Miller (Philip Peatman Collection), Christopher Morley, Ezra Pound, blue-collar bard of the Central Valley John

Steinbeck, and Henry D. Thoreau. “The most important reason we collect,” Moon says, “is for access to resources for scholarly productions, documentaries, plays, and journalists’ articles. Preservation is what we’re doing when we bring in donations or acquire a purchase. It’s all about research, teaching, and learning. We are a public university, and we need to make things accessible! Our top collections include the California Multi-Ethnic Archives, American religions, William Wyles, performing arts, and Santa Barbara history.”

Special Collections has a number of symbiotic relationships with researchers who both feed the collection and mine it. Abel Debritto is a (Beat poet) Charles Bukowski scholar and expert who visits annually from Spain to conduct research. Debritto is also regularly called upon by Special Collections when they have a question about the beery bard of the boarding house. “We consult with him when getting offers of Bukowski items,” Moon confirms. In terms of local authors, Moon acquired some original rare copies



Wonder-gadgetry for digitizing audio archives

It's said these rare and curious objects can be read without an internet connection. First and signed editions of major American and British authors.



of Sue Grafton's early books "before the Alphabet series."

Also drawing from the deep end of the Santa Barbara "legendary talent pool" are texturally and textually delicious book arts, including artist Mary Heebner's *Ocean* (she whose restless work has appeared in the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, the National Gallery, the Library of Congress, and a number of other tumbledown roadside stops), and the photographic work of her husband, renowned Yucatán Peninsula proselytizer Macduff Everton. Carolee Campbell's Ninja Press is represented by the gorgeous and helplessly tactile *objets d'art poétique* for which she is celebrated. Harry and Sandra Liddell Reese's magnetic and unclassifiable bookwork, and Linda Ekstrom's eyebrow-raising explorations of the numinous, have likewise found permanent residence in the heart of the artists' collective alma mater. Noel Young's beloved Capra Press archives have come home thanks to Capra's Robert E. Bason, and perennially gracious philanthropist Sara Miller McCune's rare book collection springs eternal as a dynamic bequest (see "Speaking Volumes," page 120). "She will continue gradually providing material," Moon says happily. "She is still actively collecting!"

“Despite being less-robustly funded than other large universities and Ivy Leagues, we have similar world-class collections, and these have mostly come in via donation. In any case, we have amazing collections! We pride ourselves on making these collections accessible for world-wide discovery.”

Special Collections are currently working with documentarian-photographer Nell Campbell to acquire Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta images from Campbell's acclaimed body of work. The Santa Barbara artiste cabal further includes Rosanne (R.T.) Livingston, whose 9/11 work in Manhattan stirs and electrifies as an online exhibit. Former Montecito resident and contemporary artist Nancy Gifford – whose unavoidably poignant and timely Lament installation now resides in the



Special Collections' political archives tell perennial stories of leadership and hope

Santa Barbara Public Library – is donating a digital archive of all of her artwork from 1980 onward; a once-dissolving cache now restored and preserved in striking perpetuity thanks to modern tech. “Luckily,” Gifford wrote in an email from her new home in toasty Scottsdale, Arizona (it’s a dry heat) – “we were able to scan and color-correct all the old chromes before they deteriorated too much.”

The Santa Barbara history collection goes back to the city’s foundational (and diminutive) dynamo Pearl Chase – she who ran roughshod over the day’s mustachioed loudmouths to make Santa Barbara the garden that it is. It also includes political archives acquired from former-U.S. Congressional representatives Walter and Lois Capps as well as recently retired California State Senator Hannah-Beth Jackson. When Jackson was closing down her office, the library reached out and UCSB history professor Dr. Mary Furner took it on herself to pick up the proffered materials from Jackson’s house. Jackson’s husband, retired Superior Court Judge George Eskin, had but one desperate-sounding instruction for Dr. Furner: “Don’t come back with anything!”

UCSB has a comparatively flat budget for collections and has not received any new allocations since 2009 or so; this despite rising costs of serials and digital content. In Special Collections, Moon manages various endowments – but by American

Research Library Standards, UCSB’s endowed funds output is “quite moderate” (less than \$100,000 annually). “Most of the endowments are restricted to specific formats and subject areas,” says Moon, but is insistent on one point of pride: “Despite being less-robustly funded than other large universities and Ivy Leagues, we have similar world-class collections, and these have mostly come in via donation. We do receive cash support with many of our collection donations as an additional financial resource, and many donors do this because they feel strongly about making their collections accessible.”

It does take a village – or in this case a canny gang of culture fiends – to navigate the byzantine rules of procurement and turn austerity into a publicly edifying awesomeness. Danelle Moon and her team are surely experts at the creative stone-squeezing that continues to bring in the goods. UCSB’s Special Collections is, to paraphrase Sinatra, a Many-Splendored Thing. Thanks to the team of helmeted culture-spelunkers, it will only become more so. UCSB’s Special Research Collections’ animating spirit is scholarship, yes. But “scholarship” is an unnecessarily plain-faced noun with the heart of a roman candle. Right, Annie? “I was once paid for a story with a pair of suede roller skates!” she laughs.

See?



Molten core of erudition and history -
Special Research Collections' cleverly
disguised nerve center