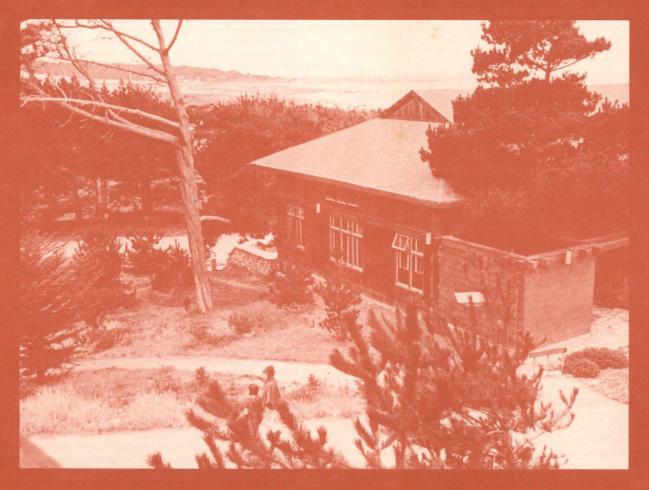
# **Teachers Rebuilding Education: Beyond the Reform Movement**

Asilomar Conference Grounds Pacific Grove

September 22-24, 1989





# **Teachers Rebuilding Education: Beyond the Reform Movement**

"In my judgment the English apparatus needs a major rebuilding, and I offer that mechanical metaphor as a way of moving beyond the revolution/reform opposition."

Robert Scholes, Textual Power, 1985.

"The more that educational policies are promulgated by higher levels of government, the more bureaucratic will become the conception of the school . . . . To the extent that teachers reject the bureaucratic conception of school, educational policies will fail. The belief that education must be liberating and that schools cannot be standardized buttresses this rejection."

> Arthur E. Wise, Legislated Learning: The Bureaucratization of the American Classroom, 1979.

Last year, many Asilomar 38 participants asked us to extend the "Reform, Revolution and the English Teacher" theme of that conference. Certainly no "Revolution" has materialized and the depth of reform is arguable. In the English language arts, "reform" frequently consists of trendy, fragmented nostrums such as simple-minded teacher-proof curriculum or massive and misleading testing programs.

These "cures" for our educational ills are too often bureaucratically imposed—while the views of teachers are scorned or quietly ignored. For more than a decade we have known that top-down mandates for educational change bring little or no improvement. Now, at Asilomar 39, the insights and ideas we share will strengthen a growing anti-bureaucratic trend in school reform deliberations and contribute to an emerging public awareness that the important improvements in schooling stem from the collective wisdom of teachers.

The Asilomar conference is sponsored by the Curriculum Study Commission of the Central California Council of Teachers of English, an affiliate of the California Association of Teachers of English and the National Council of Teachers of English.

# **PROGRAM**

### Friday, September 22

3:30-9:00 p.m. Registration

Wine and Cheese: Reception hosted by 4:30-6:00 p.m.

**CCCTE Executive Board** 

6:00-7:00 p.m.

Dinner

7:30-9:00 p.m.

General Session I

Elizabeth George, high school and community college English teacher; author of A Great Deliverance, and

Payment in Blood.

9:15-10:00 p.m.

Group Session I

#### Saturday, September 23

7:45 a.m.

Breakfast (with special tables for first-

time participants)

9:00 a.m.-12:00 noon Group Sessions II and III

12:00-1:00 p.m.

Lunch

Dinner

1:30-3:00 p.m.

Group Session IV

4:30-6:00 p.m.

Reception hosted by the Curriculum

Study Commission

6:00-7:00 p.m.

7:30-8:45 p.m.

General Session II

Robert Scholes, author of Textual Power (1985); awarded the 1986 Mina P. Shaughnessy Prize (MLA) and the 1988 David H. Russell Research Award (NCTE).

8:45-10:15 p.m.

Around the Hearth—Informal Discussions

-Conversation with Elizabeth George,

Writer-in-Residence.

-Panel on the California Language Arts Framework and the California

Assessment Program—and on how they

can work together.

-Dear America: Letters Home from Vietnam, 90-minute film featuring letters home from men and women who served in Vietnam, set to newsreel footage and veterans' own movies. A documentary on the human side of the Vietnam tragedy.

-An evening With Dickens, featuring "The Hero of My Life," a film biography.

#### Sunday, September 24

9:00-10:00 a.m.

Group Session V

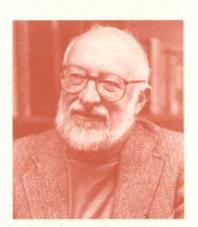
10:30 a.m.-12:15 p.m. General Session III

Albert Shanker, President, American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO: member of the (Carnegie) National Board for Professional Teaching Standards; author of weekly newspaper

column, "Where We Stand."

12:15-1:00 p.m.

Lunch





# **Featured Presentations**

# **ELIZABETH GEORGE**

An activist high school English teacher for nearly 14 years, Elizabeth George sold *A Great Deliverance*, her first novel, to Bantam in 1986. Her book subsequently appeared on the London Times best seller list and was nominated for an Edgar by the Mystery Writers of America. She has sold two more novels, *Payment in Blood* and *Well-Schooled in Murder*, and she is working on her fourth novel. The Book-of-the-Month Club and the Mysterious Press Book Club have both featured her books. Though an American, Ms. George carries out minutely detailed research in Yorkshire and elsewhere in England in order to succeed as a writer of "British" mysteries.

# **ROBERT SCHOLES**

Robert Scholes is a Professor of English and Comparative Literature at Brown University in Rhode Island. He was awarded the Mina P. Shaughnessy Prize by the Modern Language Association in 1986 and the David H. Russell Research Award by NCTE in 1988 for his book *Textual Power*, a critical analysis of reading, literary theory, and the teaching of English. A prolific scholar, Professor Scholes is the author of numerous books and journal articles on reading, criticism, and literature. This year he became Vice President and President Elect of the Semiotic Society of America.

# **ALBERT SHANKER**

President of the American Federation of Teachers and Vice Preident of the AFL-CIO, Albert Shanker has been among the most influential contributors to the education reform movement. An outspoken advocate of teachers for over twenty-five years, he has sometimes surprised critics and supporters alike by advancing controversial proposals based more on concern for the long-term welfare of public education than on gaining immediate, short-term advantages for his members. Mr. Shanker has served on many of the major reform commissions, including the Carnegie Commission, and he appears frequently on popular news programs devoted to education and school reform.

# Beyond the Refe

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# **Workshop Sessions**

The Asilomar conference is based on sustained group discussion; each person meets with one continuing group for the entire weekend. Although each group includes a chairperson and one or more resource people, these individuals are not intended to function as lecturers. Rather, workshop participants share information and insights and collectively determine the direction of the evolving discussion. This emphasis on good talking, on pursuing intellectual interests together, has given the Asilomar conference its singular character and reputation.

Please select a first and second choice workshop in which you would enjoy being a contributing member. (You are asked to submit two choices because the final scheduling of each workshop depends upon on a minimum number of participants.)

Letters following group titles indicate their grade-level focus:

E Elementary -

M Middle

S Secondary

C College G General (all levels)

#### 1. The Literature of the Vietnam War (S,C)

Although it was America's most recent (and longest) war, Vietnam is rarely discussed in schools. Participants in this workshop will share materials and practices suitable for acquainting students with some of the extensive fiction, nonfiction, and oral history collections concerning the war. Related literature about other wars will also be discussed, along with use of teaching strategies such as oral histories, film, and graphics. Suggested reading: Tim O'Brien, If I Die in a Combat Zone, Box Me Up and Ship Me Home; Tim O'Brien, Going After Cacciato; Bernard Edelman, Dear America: Letters from Vietnam; Philip Caputo, Rumor of War, Ron Kovic, Born on the Fourth of July; Bobbie Ann Mason, In Country; Al Santoli, Everything We Had.

# 2. What's So Funny? Humor and Other Problems in Three Shakespearean "Comedies" (S,C)

The Merchant of Venice, Twelfth Night, and The Taming of the Shrew are three frequently taught comedic plays by Shakespeare. Is the essential comedy of these plays rooted in cruelty and intolerance? Or, does their humor of character and situation transcend those limitations? Participants will discuss, read aloud, dramatize and view portions of the plays, emphasizing ways to bring out their humor for students. If possible, bring examples of your own successful lessons for these works. Suggested additional reading: Christopher Marlowe, The Jew of Malta.

#### 3. Writing on the Road (G)

Freeing students from the classroom for observing, investigating and writing in the field encourages experimentation with different points of view and genres. Workshop participants will select one of several local destinations (Point Lobos, Monterey Aquarium, Robinson Jeffers' Tor House) to explore and write about. We will respond to one another's emerging drafts during the weekend. A classroom resource publication might be our final product.

#### 4. The Contemporary Latin American Short Story (S)

Discussion of themes and techniques in selected classic short stories currently taught to high school students. Stories available in Barbara Howes (Ed.), Eye of the Heart: Jose Donoso, "Paseo;" Maria-Luise Bombal "The Trao" lung lose Arreds "The

# 10. Portfolio Assessment: An Evaluation and Learning Tool for Students and Teachers (G)

This group will examine several models of writing portfolios and their various uses. We will consider the writing that might be included in student portfolios and criteria for selecting writing samples and scoring them reliably. We will also discuss how writing portfolios can help improve curriculum and assess the effectiveness of teaching. If possible, participants should bring examples of student writing folders or portfolios.

### 11. Collaborative Learning (G)

The collective thoughts and experiences of students create a synergistic effect that exceeds what each student could accomplish alone. Group participants will share successful techniques for planning, conducting, and evaluating the collaborative learning process. If possible, bring a literary work that is used in your classroom.

#### 12. Murder in the Halls of Academe (G)

The halls of academe — from pre-school to college — may seem unlikely places for murder, but in mystery fiction they are often rampant with fear, rivalry, grievances, petty hatreds and thwarted passions. Our group will explore the nature of crime and detection as portrayed in core works by several leading writers of the academic mystery. Suggested readings: Robert Bernard, Death of an Old Goat; Edward Candy, Words for Murder Perhaps; David Carkeet, Double Negative; Amanda Cross, The Theban Mysteries; Susan Kenney, Graves in Academe; Robert Robinson, Landscape with Dead Dons.

#### 13. The Heroine With a Thousand Faces

We will examine the heroine's journey in legend, myth, and fairy tale and in contemporary re-working of this material in modern literary works with a central female character. We will discuss how the heroine's journey is similar to — and different from — the hero's journey as described by Joseph Campbell in *The Hero With a Thousand Faces*. Please bring your favorite tales, short stories and/or novels to discuss, especially those from diverse cultures. Suggested reading: Apuleius, *Amor and Psyche*; Campbell, *The Hero With a Thousand Faces*.

#### 14. Literature: The Primary Core (E)

The power of literature can touch the deepest human feeling at any age. How can we make this power the core of elementary classroom instruction? The group will explore ways of giving literature a central place in the language arts curriculum from the very beginning of literacy instruction. Participants should bring books and successful lessons related to them, and we'll discuss a wide range of ideas for placing literature at the core of the curriculum.

#### California Young Reader Medal Books in the Classroom (E,M,S)

We will read and discuss the books nominated for the 1989-90 school year. Participants will share book talk techniques and explore effective classroom strategies and activities for specific grade levels. Suggested reading, Primary Grades Category. Browne, Piggybook; Leaf, Eyes of the Dragon; Martin, Barn Dance; Rylant, The Relatives Came; Ziefert, A New Coat for Anna. Intermediate Grades: Byars, Not-Just-Anybody Family; Keller, Desdemona-Twelve Going on Desperate; Smith, War with Grandpa. Junior High Grades: Nixon, Other Side of Dark; Paulson, Hatchet; Smith, Return to Bitter Creek. Senior High Grades: Nazer, After the Rain; Pfeffer, The Year Without Michael; Voigt, Issy Willy Willy.

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#### 22. Response to Reader Response (G)

The language arts classroom allows both teacher and student to respond to literature in a variety of ways. We will examine several modes in which students might respond to literature, such as dialectical journals, literature logs, written conversations, reflection notes, graphics, and dramatic presentations. We will also discuss ways of valuing and evaluating reader response. Finally, we will explore how student response can help shape the curriculum. Please bring examples of reader responses from your classes. Suggested reading: Louise Rosenblatt, *Literature as Exploration*; Robert Scholes, *Textual Power*.

#### 23. Ted Hughes, England's Poet Laureate (G)

Americans know Ted Hughes, Poet Laureate of England since 1984, primarily as the author of powerful verse on mythological themes evoking the beauty and violence of the natural world. His books for children and his essays for young people about writing are less familiar. We will emphasize the poetry and prose by Hughes that are appropriate for classroom use. Bring copies of your Hughes favorites to share with the group. Suggested readings: Ted Hughes, Poetry in the Making, Flowers and Insects, Season Songs, Selected Poems 1957-1981, Under the North Star.

# 24. Students at Risk: How Can We Help Them Achieve? (M,S)

While many teachers are concerned about students in danger of failing or dropping out, few schools actually support those students effectively. The PHOENIX Project in the Tamalpais High School District offers specific support for at-risk ninth and tenth graders, both in their academic and social lives. Project teachers will demonstrate activities for developing self-esteem, study skills, and responsibility. Bring your concerns and any strategies and activities you've used that were successful with students at risk

# 25. Letting Go of the Basal Reader: Teaching Reading with Literature (E)

Participants will explore strategies for teaching beginning reading using a literature-based approach as an alternative to programs that rely primarily on a basal reader. The group will examine the kinds of materials needed and will discuss ways of designing successful lessons. Members will participate in illustrative, literature-based lessons for developing children's decoding and comprehension skills. Group members with experience in literature-based reading programs should bring examples of materials and lessons. Suggested reading: Terry D. Johnson and Daphne R. Louis, *Literacy Through Literature*.

### 26. Exploring "Confessional" Poetry (G)

The Asilomar poetry workshop this year will share and write poems rooted in personal experience. Robert Lowell, John Berryman, and Anne Sexton are prominent names associated with "confessional" poetry, a genre which seeks to elevate autobiography to the level of poetic art. Participants will practice the journal-writing techniques of Ira Progoff as a way of tapping experiences they can use in writing their own confessional poems. Group members (limited to 20) should bring 20 copies of their favorite poems written in this style.

### Observations and Reflections on Putting the CAP Writing Test in Its Place — Your Classroom (E,M,S)

Combine a weekend of writing your own observations and reflections, using the resources of the Asilomar grounds, with sharing ideas about using California Assessment Program writing guidelines and materials in our teaching. If possible, bring 25 copies of a favorite observational writing or reflective

# Conference Fees

### Registration

Early Registration (by July 1)

Participants will receive a \$5 reduction by paying all conference fees (registration, lodging and meals) by July 1, 1989

September 22-24, 1989

Regular Registration (by September 10)

Because a predetermined number of rooms on the Asilomar grounds have been reserved for this conference, registrations are processed in the order they are received until all spaces are filled. To be assured of accommodations, participants must register by paying all fees by September 10, 1989.

#### Refunds

For cancellations, a refund, minus a \$15 processing fee, will be granted if requested by September 10. No refunds will be granted after September 10, 1989.

Late Registration (after September 10)

The Asilomar management's strict procedures now make it impossible to guarantee on-grounds accommodations for late registrants. Participants interested in registering after September 10 must call the Conference Registrar, John Cotter, (415) 357-5425 to determine whether rooms are still available on the conference grounds. No on-site registrations are taken.

### **Lodging and Meals**

The accommodation fee includes two nights' lodging and six (6) meals, Friday dinner, served from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m., through Sunday lunch.

Please note: Only a very limited number of single rooms are available. Recent renovations have increased the fee for previously cheaper accommodations. All room assignments are on a first-come, first-served basis. Rooms fill early.

Monterey Peninsula residents may register for the conference on a nonresidential basis by paying the off-grounds fee of \$15. Meals are not included; however, individual meal tickets may be purchased at the Asilomar office.

Saturday Reception

San Leandro, CA 94577

For an additional \$5, participants may attend the reception on Saturday afternoon. Both alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages will be available.

# Membership Fees

Members of CCCTE or any other regional affiliate of the California Association of Teachers of English (CATE) pay the reduced registration fee.

Those who pay the non-member fee automatically receive a one-membership (\$30.00) in CATE, effective October 1, 1989, which entitles them to reduced rates at other conferences, including the annual CATE convention, and a one-year subscription to California English. Current CATE members or those whose membership has expired recently may renew their membership at the Asilomar conference registration desk.

# if you have questions . . .

About registration or lodgings, or if you need extra copies of this brochure, write or telephone John Cotter, (415) 357-5425
2882 Marine View Dr.

Switchman;" Octavio Paz, "My Life with the Wave." Other stories that will be sent in advance to workshop participants: Carlos Fuentes, "Chac Mool;" Julio Cortazar, "The Night Face Up;" Jorge Luis Borges, "The Circular Ruins." Participants are encouraged to bring copies of additional Latin American stories they have taught successfully and would like to discuss.

# 5. Romancing the Facts: Integrating Social Science and Language Arts (M,S)

Theme, point-of-view, context, drama, content — do these terms apply to history and social science as well as to the language arts? We will identify ways of studying and integrating the fields of history/social science and language arts through the use of novels, essays, short stories, and poetry. Participants are urged to bring 25-30 copies of their own successful integrated lessons.

# 6. The Grapes of Wrath: From 1939 to 1989 (S,C)

We will explore the contemporary, historical, and literary significance of this California classic in the classroom, in the groves of academe, and in the public consciousness. What hath time wrought in the fifty years since Steinbeck's once contro versial novel appeared? Suggested reading: John Steinbeck, *The Grapes of Wrath*; Cliff Lewis & Carroll Britch, (Eds.) Rediscovering Steinbeck; John Steinbeck, *The Harvest Gypsies*.

# 7. Breaking the Silence: Putting Literature by Women and People of Color in the Classroom (M,S,C)

We will explore ways of including neglected literature by women and people of color in our curriculum—for example, Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God* and the spirit toward healing our planet which is present in the writing of many of these authors. Bring relevant lessons and materials that you have used, and plan to discuss images of women and people of color portrayed in your school's core curriculum. Suggested reading: the first two chapters of *Silences*, by Tillie Olsen; "In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens," in the essay anthology of the same name by Alice Walker; and "Everything Is a Human Being," in *Living by the Word* by Alice Walker.

# 8. Caught in the Middle (E,M,S)

How can we best serve the varied needs of middle school students? Participants will explore teaching stategies, changes in curriculum, innovative restructuring of schedules and courses, opportunities for student collaboration, and long-range projects. Although emphasis will be on middle grade students, our topics should also be of interest to upper elementary and secondary teachers. Recommended reading: Caught in the Middle (\$5.35, available from California State Department of Education, P.O. Box 271, Sacramento, CA 95802-0271).

# 9. The Graphic Connection (G)

Participants will explore visual ways of integrating literature and composition instruction, as advocated by the California Model Curriculum Standards. Working with maps, lifelines, mandalas, and other forms, we will both discuss and practice using graphics as tools for composing and comprehending. Student examples of visual ways to organize information will be available as we design assignments for "Monday morning."

### 16. Born to be Bad (G)

Group members will study two operas, Boito's *Mefistofele* and Verdi's *Otello*. We will use both audio and video versions of these works to examine the composers' conceptions of evil antagon ists. Participants should bring libretti if possible, although materials for analysis of selected sections will be provided.

# 17. Teachers Writing Their Stories (G)

Workshop participants will write and help others write anecdotes, poems, stories, or tales that capture our lives as teachers. The writing may focus upon our lives both in and out of the classroom as we seek to relate to students and communicate subject matter. Our writing will be collected for possible publication in future issues of *California English* and perhaps in an anthology. Suggested reading: Louis D. Rubin Jr., *An Apple for my Teacher*.

# 18. The Sudden ESL Teacher (M,S)

As the number of limited English students increases dramatically, many teachers are suddenly or arbitrarily assigned an ESL class. At the same time, limited English students are increasingly being mainstreamed into all classes. We will discuss strategies and methods for teaching both ESL and mainstream English classes and will examine "sheltered" classrooms as one way of assisting ESL students. Participants should bring successful teaching materials to share with others.

# The Novels of Cynthia Voigt: Core Works or Extended Works—or Both? (E,M)

Cynthia Voigt has won many children's literature awards, including the Newberry Medal in 1963 for *Dicey's Song*. Focusing on family relationships, on children's need for independence and responsibility, and on similar themes with special appeal for intermediate and middle grade students, her books are regularly included on district core and extended reading lists. We will discuss the literary merits of Voigt's work and ways to include it in the curriculum. Recommended reading: *Building Blocks*, *Solitary Blue*, and *Sons from Afar*.

# 20. Teacher Reflection and Inquiry—i.e., Teacher Research (G)

Why do already busy teachers at all grade levels elect to carry out classroom research? What are the concrete procedures, benefits, and rationales behind the mystique of research? We will explore practical methods for classroom teachers to carry out such investigations, as well as guidelines for designing studies, sources of funding and support for beginning and experienced researchers, and ways to institutionalize teacher research in our schools or districts.

# 21. Writing to Learn (G)

This workshop will focus on writing as a process, not as a product. By involving participants in a variety of *short* writing assignments, group sessions will emphasize the frequently overlooked benefits that writing can provide for learning in any subject area. Participants will also share assignments and teaching experiences in which writing was used as a mode of learning.

essay to share with other participants. Also, try to bring the Grade 8 and/or Grade 12 CAP Writing Handbook, available from your principal or district office, or from the State Department of Education.

# 28. Effective Strategies for Coping with the Workload (E.M.S)

Classroom teachers often find that teaching the English language arts effectively requires more hours than there are in the day. This workload too often results in teacher burnout and the departure of many teachers—especially begining teachers—from the profession. How can K-12 English language arts teachers reduce their workload without sacrificing the quality of instruction? Bring your own time and energy saving strategies to share and discuss.

# 29. Whole Language for the Whole School (E)

Members of this group will discuss how an entire school builds a literacy program based upon a whole language perspective. We will define concepts, clarify important differences between basal and whole language approaches, and present examples of successful programs. All participants are invited to help develop strategies for transforming existing programs. Suggested reading: Ken Goodman, What's Whole in Whole Language?; Regie Routman, Transitions.

### 30. So You "Volunteered" for Journalism! (M,S)

This year the journalism workshop invites novice as well as experienced and veteran journalism teachers to explore such problems as improving inherited journalism practices, building next year's staff, raising money to counter budget cuts, confronting new equipment, and qualifying for U.C. English credit. We will analyze our methods and procedures and possibly draft criteria for a proposed journalism credential. If possible, bring for sharing sample newspapers, dummy layouts, and classroom and/or staff management guidelines.

# 31. Teaching Great Expectations (S,C)

Dickens' explorations of greed, social snobbery and frustrated love are especially timely for our increasingly materialistic society. We will focus on making his novels, and especially *Great Expectations*, accessible by discussing a variety of teaching approaches and strategies for enhancing student understanding and pleasure. We will also examine the *Great Expectations* resource handbook prepared by the Dickens Project at UC-Santa Cruz. Suggested reading: Charles Dickens, *Great Expectations* (Penguin).

# 32. Using Folklore to Get Students Involved in Learning (G)

We will focus on contemporary American folklore: family folklore, children's folklore, urban legends, school and teenage folklore, contemporary folk heroes, the folklore of naming, and graffiti. Group members will discover and write about their own folklore and discuss ways to integrate folklore and folklore units into the curriculum. Teachers who have used modern folklore, either mainstream or multicultural, are encouraged to bring materials and examples of student work.

# Conference Bookstore

Note: Suggested reading books will be available at the conference bookstore. To place orders for books prior to the conference, phone or write:

ARTIST'S PROOF 460 Magnolia Avenue, Larkspur, CA 94939, (415) 924-3801

Registration Form Please make out a separate form for each person registering. Mail this form and your check for the full amount (made out to Curriculum Study Commission) to: John Cotter, 2882 Marine View Dr., San Leandro, CA 94577 Name \_ Address \_\_\_ number daytime telephone School & district \_\_\_\_\_ Please give the number of the Workshop Session preferred: Second Choice \_ First Choice \_\_\_\_\_ CATE Please Registration Fee Nonmember member fill in amount Early registration \$45 \$75 (fees paid in full by July 1): Regular registration: \$50 \$80 \$75 \$105 Late registration (after September 10): **Lodging & Meals** (prices per person) Please check desired accommodation: RUSTIC (shared bath) Guest Inn ☐ 2/3 to a room \$78 HISTORIC (shared bath) Lodge, Scripps ☐ Single \$110 ☐ 2/3 to a room \$88 DELUXE (private bath) Sea Galaxy, Surf and Sand ☐ 3/4 to a room \$90 East Woods, North Woods, View Crescent 2 to a room \$98 ☐ 3 to a room (queen/single) \$90 Nonsmoker Smoker Nonsmoker roommate, please Vegetarian Menu on request \$15 Off-Grounds Fee

\$5

Saturday Reception (optional)

Please check if this is your

first Asilomar conference

No school purchase orders accepted.)

Total fees enclosed. (Payable by personal check only.

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