

President's



Corner

Monday, Jan. 16—Program Enrollment Opens; Member Survey

Tuesday, Jan. 17—National Day of Racial Healing.

Friday, Jan. 20—Program Leader Workshop, Hybrid

Saturday, Jan 28—Martin Luther King Jr. celebration

Wednesday, Feb. 1—Black History Month begins

Monday, Feb. 6—RS Classes Begin

Friday, Feb. 10—"First" Friday ASI Food Pantry and Pizza Party

Wednesday, Feb. 15—Applications due for Board of Directors positions

Renaissance Website:
<https://tinyurl.com/rensociety/>

Deborah Seiler

President
The Renaissance Society
of Sacramento
deborah.seiler2@gmail.com

Spring semester is finally here, and what a fantastic lineup of learning opportunities. Your Program and Forum committees have been hard at work to bring you an incredible array of programs, including a brand-new Wednesday Science Series. As in the Fall, classes on Monday through Thursday will be on Zoom and Friday offerings are in person on the Sac State campus. Encourage your friends and families to join this semester for the bargain price of \$60. Better yet, give a gift of membership to someone on your Valentine's Day list.

Happily, we have social functions to look forward to once again. The first Pizza Party will be on Friday, February 10 at 4 p.m. at Round Table in the University Union. We especially encourage new members to attend. Be sure to wear your badge so we can welcome you and treat you to pizza. Later this spring, we will share news about a possible bus trip to the East Bay and a picnic in Arden Park. If you are interested in helping me organize a special event dedicated to new members, email me at Deborah.seiler2@gmail.com or call me at (916) 704 5735. Finally, be sure to check out the "Brown Bag Area" in the University Union near the Panda Express and the sandwich shop. Members Carol and Al Barake will be meeting there at noon on Fridays to welcome you to join them as they gather for an informal lunch between classes. Grab a sandwich or bring your own and meet other Renaissance members!

I also urge you to enrich your Renaissance experience by getting involved. Join a committee, consider applying for a position on the Board of Directors, volunteer with one of our campus partners, or help organize a social event. These are ways to meet many wonderful, talented peers in the organization. You will be amazed at our members' variety of experiences and fascinating backgrounds.

Finally, I join Susan Brackenhoff, Barbara Davis-Lyman, and Shari Lowen in encouraging you to consider applying for a position on the Board of Directors. Help us guide the organization as we seek to increase our membership and diversity and continue our commitment to Sac State students and the Hornet Family.

We're off to another great start!



FORUMS

February 10

Craig McNamara:

Larry Stephan Berman

Because Our Fathers Lied—A Conversation



Craig McNamara came of age in the political tumult and upheaval of the late '60's. While Craig would grow up to take part in anti-war demonstrations, his father, Robert McNamara was John F. Kennedy's Secretary of Defense and the architect of the Vietnam

War. His searching and revealing memoir offers an intimate picture of one father and son at a pivotal period in American history.

Joining Craig in conversation will be historian **Larry Berman** who has written extensively about US intervention and escalation in Vietnam and the role of Robert McNamara in these critical decisions. Please join us in conversation as Craig and Larry discuss his highly acclaimed book *Because Our Fathers Lied: A Memoir of Truth and Family*.



February 17

Lynn Huntsinger

Nature's Value and the Future of California's Working Landscapes



Professor **Lynn Huntsinger's** research focuses on the conservation and management of grasslands and woodlands. Do investments in a future landscape pay off? Conservation Easements create a conservation partnership between landowners and conservation organizations, one of which is the California Rangeland Trust.

While they are much less costly to the public than land acquisition and public management, the Trust asked us, what is the return on our investment in easements? Lynn will present the answer she and Prof. Van Butsic found. The "silent partners" on the two million acres of California working landscape easements are cattle, sheep, goats, and a multitude of wild plants and animals, including soil microbes and bacteria.

February 24

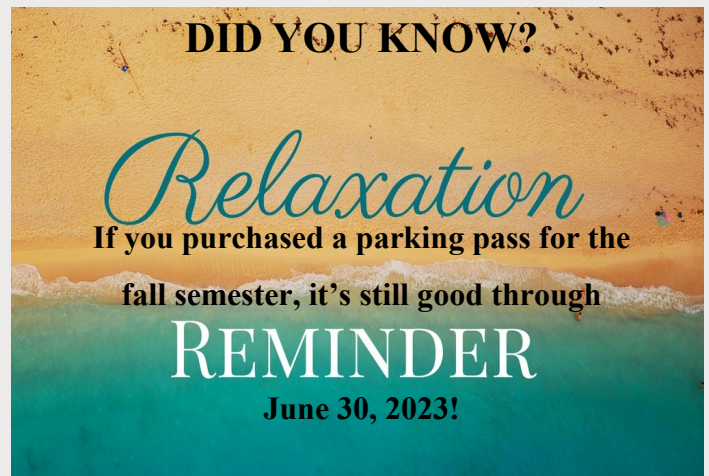
Jeffrey Mount

Priorities for California Water:
Thriving with Less

Jeffrey Mount is a senior fellow at the PPIC Water Policy Center. He is an emeritus professor of earth and planetary sciences and founding director of the Center for Watershed Sciences at UC Davis. A geomorphologist who specializes in the study of rivers, streams, and wetlands, his research focuses on integrated water resource management, flood management, and improving aquatic ecosystem health.



He has served on many state and federal boards and commissions that address water resource management issues in the West. He has published more than a hundred articles, books, and other publications, including the seminal book *California Rivers and Streams* (UC Press). He holds a PhD and MS in earth sciences from the University of California, Santa Cruz.



DINING TOGETHER

By Cheryl Nelson

Dining Together will meet at **Plan B Restaurant**, 555 La Sierra Boulevard <https://planbrestaurant-arden.com> at **5:30 PM on February 8, 2023**.



Dining Together members who wish to attend should **RSVP** to Cheryl Nelson by email: slynnsearch@yahoo.com, or by phone: (916) 421-0407 no later than **February 2, 2023**.

Plan to bring cash (including small bills as separate checks may not be possible, depending upon the size of our group). Parking is available. The dinners will conform to County COVID health requirements.



In Memoriam

Betty Christoff, according to her daughter, passed on December 15, 2022. She was 84.

NATIONAL DAY OF HEALING

January 17, 2023, Tuesday, marks the seventh annual **National Day of Racial Healing**.

On this day, individuals, organizations and communities across the U.S. come together to explore their common humanity and build the relationships necessary to create a more just and equitable world.

If interested, click link below:

<https://www.nlc.org/events/national-day-of-racial-healing>



RENAISSANCE SOCIETY WINS THE 2022 GOLDEN PLATE AWARD!

By Deborah Seiler

Renaissance members, you've done it again! For the second year in a row, you have won the ASI Food Pantry's Golden Plate Award by raising the most funds for the Thanksgiving Food Basket drive.

The award goes to the Sac State department that raises the most funds to provide food baskets to food insecure students and their families during the holidays. Food Pantry Coordinator, Ryan Choi, reports that one in four users have dependents who also rely on our generosity. Some are supporting children and spouses, but many are also supporting parents and siblings.

You all raised \$10,320 between October 3rd and November 11th to make this year's Thanksgiving Food Baskets event possible! This is a 115% increase over 2021's total amount raised (\$4,800) and helped cover 137 baskets!

Ryan Choi, Food Pantry Coordinator

During our January 13 Orientation, Ryan and Wil Chen, Director of Student Engagement and Outreach, presented the award and reported on the sharp increase in food pantry usage due to inflation. The Food Pantry was launched in 2015 and Renaissance began supporting it in 2017, thanks primarily to the efforts of Allan Keown and Maryellen Burns.

Nice work, members! Thanks for your generosity!

MEMBERS LOVE RENAISSANCE!

I LOVE Renaissance Society
and all the opportunities for
new experiences!!!
Anonymous

In Alice Stamm's sketching
class, I discovered that even I
can draw. I followed her gentle,
patient guidance and learned to
see the lines and transfer them
to the paper.

Helena Camilo

I took the class called Racial Healing:
Conversations About Race. This is a
wonderful informative class. I learned
an amazing amount of information! I
wish I had had this knowledge when I
was working!

Catherine Kirwan

Chip Zempel continues to excel
as does Bob Lang and Mike
Agron.

The Big History class is equally
interesting.
I love learning about qi gong,
another excellent class.

Anonymous

I had a very informative semester
learning about the Great Lakes region
from Beth Mann (and others). Each
week we learned about history, trans-
portation, people, politics, and all
taught by a very engaging presenter.

C.J. "Chris" Roe, Ed.D.

Bob Lang's Real Rock 'N Roll class
is a tour de force. He and Tom
Holt are a hoot and a half!
Sherman Haggarty's class on
Homelessness gave me a whole
new and valuable perspective on
the problem.

Deborah Seiler

Mike Agron's music class was phenomenal!
He's very knowledgeable and always well
prepared!

I loved Louise's class about A Tale of
Two Cities because she artfully directed the
discussions, and I gained many insights
from my classmates.

Karen Yee did an outstanding job in her
presentation about the Chinese in Yosemite!

Teresa Sewell

REFLECTIONS OF AMERICA CULTURE

By Darryl Omar Freeman

A Chinese American Hero

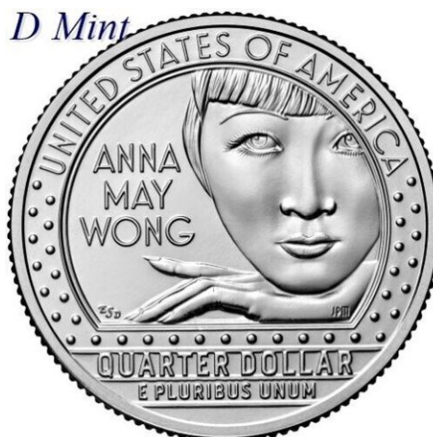


Lunar New Year (also known as Chinese New Year) is celebrated from January 22, 2023, ending on February 9, 2024. The new animal sign is the **Year of the Rabbit**, more specifically, **Water Rabbit**. For this issue of the Recorder, I thought it appropriate to identify an Asian American who made a significant contribution to the evolving culture of American society.

The public sector stereotyping of Asian Americans has been supported to a large extent by the perpetuation of Asian myths created by the private sector. Early Hollywood productions and the movie industry in general devoted much of its minimal representation of Asian people as opium smoking aberrant people who were speaking broken English, comical and illiterate people to be aware of, if not afraid of. Colloquial labeling of the “yellow peril” permeated the main theme of movies produced by the industry in the 1930s and 1940s. Adding insult to injury the actors depicting Chinese and Japanese immigrants were played by European actors. For example, Euro-heritage actor, Mickey Rooney, epitomized the distorted movie industry identity of Asian Americans in his depiction of Mr. Yunioshi in the classic movie *Breakfast with Tiffany* in 1961.

An early breakthrough occurred in this regard, by virtue of an Asian American actress Ms. Anna May Wong, born in Los Angeles, California in 1905. She is considered to be the first Chinese American Hollywood movie star. She was however compelled to move to Europe after struggling for roles in America to be recognized for her talent in a theatrical society that posed no restrictions on an actors’ ethnicity. As with many entertainers of color during the early 1900s in the United States, after she became the “rage” in European theatre circuits, she returned to the United States and obtained “A” movie level work as a supporting actress. Nevertheless, she continued to be subjected to Hollywood’s racialized casting preference for Euro-heritage actors for leading roles. The major movie studio MGM refused to consider Ms. Wong for the lead role of the Chinese character in the film version of the popular play *The Good Earth*, choosing instead a Euro-heritage actress. She spent the next few years, touring China and occasionally returning to the United States to star in several “B” movies.¹

In 1960 Anna May Wong became the first Asian American/Pacific Islander (AAPI) woman to receive a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. Last October the US Mint issued her quarter, making her the first Asian American displayed on US currency. Pioneering actor Wong is part of the American Women Quarters program which includes Maya Angelou (writer), Dr. Sally Ride (educator, astronaut), Wilma Mankiller (elected chief of the Cherokee Nation) and Nina Otero-Warren (New Mexico suffrage leader). In the 1950’s she made television appearances which included playing the first AAPI lead television actor in *The Gallery of Madame Liu-Tsong* (1951). She appeared in more than 60 movies. Wong was slated for the movie adaptation of *Flower Drum Song* but bowed out due to illness. She died February 3, 1961. Ms. Ann May Wong, a historical hero in the evolving American social culture.



MEMBER PROFILE

Is There Any Part of the World That Virginia Sturdevant Has Not Explored?

By Judy A. Lewis



Although Virginia was born in Sacramento, her adventures have taken her everywhere. After attending Sacramento City College and U.C. Davis, she settled into a degree in Criminology from U.C. Berkley. Virginia and her UCD roommate then embarked on a tour around Europe, including Germany, Switzerland, Spain, Italy, and France, often staying in youth hostels. During their travels, she found a position where in exchange for free room and board, she was “basically a chambermaid” at a winter camp for intercity children. Her vocabulary on how to correctly mop a German floor and change feather beds expanded quickly.

Back in the U.S., Virginia found a spot as a fingerprint examiner for the California Department of Justice, which was right up her alley since she describes herself as “a detail person who is fascinated by the patterns and ridges in fingerprints.”

Virginia quit that job in 1978 and joining a group of 28 fellow adventurers from all over the world, she spent three months traveling in an Army truck and camping out at night. Their destinations included Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, and Nepal. They observed demonstrations in Iran prior to the fall of the Shah. In Afghanistan, they saw signs of the Soviet influence everywhere, including building roads and putting in telephone lines. Virginia reflects that these activities were not described accurately in the U.S media which later referred to a “sudden” Russian invasion.

Upon her return, she trained and became a computer programmer. She moved up through the ranks of State positions, eventually finding herself in charge of converting all EDD legacy computer programs to assure that they were Y2K-compliant.

Virginia met her husband while working for the State. Because of his military background, they were able to travel on a space-available basis on

military transports. As his health eventually deteriorated, he suffered a broken hip while at a dog park and passed away in 2011.

In 2008, she joined the Renaissance Society. “I just love it because it keeps me actively learning new things.” She spent almost seven years on the Seminar Committee and is currently a member of the Scholarship Committee. For the past 12 years, Virginia has led a Great Decisions discussion program through her AAUW group. She and fellow volunteers’ plant 1,000+ tulips each year in the Jensen Botanical Gardens in Carmichael.

Recently, Virginia and a friend spent three weeks in Italy, where they hiked and rented a car. Her life motto is “keep moving and keep actively learning.”



ACCEPTING BOARD MEMBER APPLICATIONS

Consider becoming a member of the **2023-2024 Renaissance Board**. Please think about what you have gained from Renaissance and make a decision to give back to the organization.

You can apply for a position on the executive board: President, Vice-President, Secretary, Controller.

Or you can apply for one of the four vacant Member-At-Large positions. Members-At-Large serve on various committees and working groups.

If interested, email susan.brackenhoff@gmail.com. Applications will be accepted until **Feb. 15**.

Apply now

LITERARY READINGS ON DIVERSITY

By Robert Benedetti and Roberta Gleeson

In Renaissance's commitment to President Nelsen's campus-wide plan to end discrimination and prejudice, we present our latest:

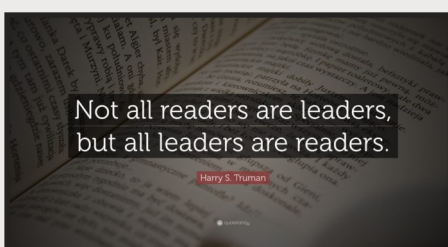


Consequences, By Manuel Munoz: Short stories centered in the Central Valley. A look in to the lives of migrants and residents of the valley and topics of everyday life. The characters are varied and cover the wide spectrum of personalities. (Adult)

The Do-Over, Jennifer Torres: This story about sisterhood, friendship, and the intricacies of blended families. Author lives in California and has been a journalist in Stockton. Hard cover, \$14, 2022. Grades 3-7.

Secret Harvests, David Mas Masumoto: "I discovered a "lost" aunt, separated from our family due to racism and discrimination against the disabled. She had a mental disability due to childhood meningitis. She was taken away in 1942 when all Japanese Americans were considered the enemy and imprisoned. She then became a ward" of the state. We believed she had died." (Available February 2023)

Stones, Kevin Young: Young's most recent book of poetry. He is currently the Director of the National Museum of African-American History and Culture, in Washington DC.



VOLUNTEER HIGHLIGHTS

By Deborah Seiler

Renaissance enriches the lives of so many adults in our community and it couldn't happen without the army of volunteers who contribute to its smooth functioning. Here are two more outstanding volunteers for you to thank if you see them:

Kathy Hart: Kathy is an ardent supporter of Renaissance, not only because of her frequent and well-received watercolor classes, but also her contributions to our internal and external communications. Kathy frequently posts breaking news about our activities and upcoming events on our internal group Facebook page along with interesting photos and timely information. Importantly, she masterminded our external Facebook page which is an invaluable tool for letting the world know about all the many benefits of our organization. She is also an expert at using Eventbrite, a global self-service ticketing platform, to announce the free programming we offer during the year. Her use of Facebook and Eventbrite finally gives us external marketing tools we have needed for so long. And they are all free! Kathy has been a Renaissance member since January 2012 and she is also a vital volunteer with Friendship Force and the Harris Center in Folsom, among other organizations. We are lucky to have her!

Pamela O'Brien: Pam is one of the hardest-working members of our Renaissance team. Pam and her late husband, Tom, joined Renaissance in 2019 after attending summer presentations at the Scottish Rite Temple. Beginning July 1, 2021, she became a Member at Large and Co-Chair of the Program Committee which is the centerpiece of our lifelong learning model. She works tirelessly to reach out to seminar leaders and other presenters to encourage them to return to teach semester after semester and year after year. She is unrelenting in her efforts to ensure our pdf and flipbook catalogs and our At A Glance summary are chock full of great information as well as being beautiful and timely. Always pleasant and cheerful despite her "heavy lift," she is an inspiration to others and a joy to have on the Board of Directors. Pam may claim her institutional knowledge has been "Swiss cheese" but she plunged into the organization with such vigor, she never misses a beat.

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Be My Valentine

By Mike Pidd



Looking for a way to remember a special someone on Valentine's Day? Instead of the usual card, why not honor someone you love on Valentine's Day with a gift to the Renaissance Society Scholarship Fund. Your Valentine will feel honored and your gift will have a lasting impact.

Make your gift online: <https://tinyurl.com/RenaissanceFunds> or by check payable to University Foundation at Sacramento State with the notation Scholarship Fund and the name and address of the person being honored with your donation. Mail check to : Renaissance Society, 350 University Ave- Suite 108, Sacramento, CA 95819