

## President's Message



**Deborah Seiler**

President

The Renaissance Society  
of Sacramento

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**Renaissance Website:**  
<https://csus.edu/rensoc>

## Key Dates

Monday, May 5  
**Board Meeting in Person**

Friday, May 9  
**ANNUAL MEETING**

Friday, May 16  
**Program Leaders  
Workshop**

Monday, June 2  
**Membership Enrollment  
Begins**

Monday, June 2  
**Applications to Teach Due**

Friday, June 6  
**Summer Program Begins**

Sunday, June 15  
**Spring Celebration and  
BBQ**



## Happy Endings

May is the time we celebrate another successful Spring semester and look forward to summer fun. We ended the 2024-2025 academic year with 1,808 (up 24 from last year) members, of whom 585 are new, 1,223 are renewed, and 69 are honorary. Please continue to share the good news about Renaissance with folks you know.

The Spring semester featured 34 seminars, 78 single presentations, 24 Shared Interest Groups (SIGs), 12 Forums, and our May 9 Annual Meeting. None of this could happen without the dedication of hundreds of volunteers and the hard work of our office staff. Tireless in their commitment, they are already planning for Fall programs.

Alas, you might think, how to fill Friday mornings during the summer? Not to worry! Jackie Lamb and her hard-working Summer Program planning group have arranged a wonderful series devoted to the arts scene in Sacramento. See page 3 for details and keep an eye out for further details.

Speaking of classes, have you thought of a topic you'd love to explore and share with fellow Renaissance members? Now is the time to take center stage and showcase your knowledge. Consider a one-time presentation, a shared interest group, or a 6 to 12-week seminar. Applications to teach are due June 2. Fall classes begin September 2.

Summers are for celebrating and our ever-creative social leader, Allan Keown, has plans for a BBQ/potluck on Sunday, June 15. Allan is also considering a mid May date to celebrate the end of my term as president, so watch for news in the Weekly Update.

Importantly, mark your calendar for our **Annual Meeting on May 9**. In addition to honoring our scholarship recipients and Diversity and Inclusion Award recipients, we will raise our hands in support of the new members on our Board of Directors. Remember, we need at least 100 of you to attend either in person or on Zoom. The meeting will conclude with refreshments in Mariposa Hall, room 1001 –right across from the room where we meet for Forums and the Annual Meeting.

With all the excitement about upcoming programs, remember, too, that membership enrollment for the 2025-2026 academic year begins June 2. Due to higher rent, salaries, and other expenses, there will be a slight increase in our dues which have not been raised since 2017. We hope the increase of \$20 for a full year and \$10 for the Spring 2026 semester will be affordable. If not, we will share information about seeking relief.

Join us for May festivities and Happy Summer!

Deborah



# May Forum and Annual Meeting

Forums are a special category of highly acclaimed, high-profile speakers addressing current topics of special interest to Renaissance members. All Forums occur on Friday afternoons in **Mariposa Hall 1000 from 3 to 4 p.m.** when no other Renaissance programs are offered.

May 2

## **JASON THOMPSON, PhD: The Music We Make, the World We Create: A Vision for Inclusive Music Education**



Can music education truly claim to be inclusive while silencing diverse voices and their musical traditions? Black Honors College faculty member Jason Thompson will explain the exclusionary practices within music education, juxtaposing his vibrant, cross-cultural musical upbringing with the rigid gatekeeping encountered in academia and its impact on those whose musical lives reside outside the Western music canon. Dr. Thompson (PhD, Northwestern University) has over 20 years as a public school music teacher, university professor, and administrator. He previously served as Interim Director of Music Education at NYU and as a graduate faculty member at Arizona State University. He is co-editor of the book "If Colors Could Be Heard, They'd Paint Wondrous Tunes."

May 9

## **Please Attend our Annual Meeting**



Our Annual Meeting is when President Deborah Seiler gives an end of year wrap up and invites Sac State President Luke Wood and other members of his cabinet to address our membership.

Traditionally this meeting includes an introduction of and tribute to our student scholarship

winners and honors those selected for our Diversity and Inclusion awards

Another critical highlight: we will raise our hands to ratify and congratulate candidates for officers and members at large. **This requires participation by at least 100 members in person or on Zoom, so please support these hard-working volunteers.**

Following this Annual Meeting, we will celebrate with refreshments in Mariposa Hall, rm 1001.



## **Dues Increases for Fiscal Year 2025-26**

*By David Ferguson, Renaissance Controller*



The Renaissance Society is funded solely by membership dues as well as extra donations some members give. Dues have remained at \$100 for a full year and \$60 for the Spring semester since 2017-18. Summer programs are free and open to the public. This

is an astonishingly low membership fee, especially compared with other lifelong learning organizations which charge both a membership fee and an additional fee for each class, sometimes totaling several hundred dollars.

Through careful management and a few lucky breaks, we avoided projected deficits in the past few years. Despite efforts to increase membership, and therefore revenue, the gains have not been sufficient to offset rising costs for salaries, rent, public relations, and other expenses. In FY 2023-24, we ran a deficit of \$1,126. In this current year, FY 2024-25, our projected deficit is \$15,237.

To keep the Society financially sound, we need to increase the membership dues. The increase will allow us to maintain the current level of service as well as grow in the future. Therefore, the dues for the 2025-2026 academic year will increase to \$120 (or \$70 for Spring only).

If any members are unable to afford the increase the Society has created a Member Scholarship fund. Members are urged to visit this website ([https://www.csus.edu/college/social-sciences-interdisciplinary-studies/renaissance-society/\\_internal/\\_documents/membershipscholarship.pdf](https://www.csus.edu/college/social-sciences-interdisciplinary-studies/renaissance-society/_internal/_documents/membershipscholarship.pdf)) and apply for help.

Registration information coming soon.

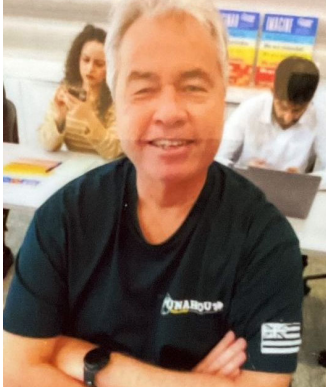
Thanks for your support and understanding!



## Joel Leong's Reaction to Discovering the Renaissance Society: WOW!

By Judy Lewis

Although he was born in Honolulu, Joel Leong grew up in San Francisco. He began his college years at San Francisco City College, then transferred to San Jose State, where he completed a major in Industrial and Systems Engineering.



The next six years were spent in Palo Alto, working in the high tech manufacturing field. It was there that he met his wife, Laurie Hudson. This was followed by involvement in a variety of construction projects, working for several agencies, including IBM.

Travel to Massachusetts, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and Nevada kept him busy. Joel reports that his "final resting point" was Sacramento, where he arrived in 2002. He retired in 2018.

In 2023, Joel heard about the Renaissance Society's summer program. His reaction was "Wow," when he discovered the variety of offerings available. Joel's gym membership gave him the opportunity to participate in a number of sports, including racquetball and basketball.

A stroke in 2019 brought a major change to his life. He entered the hospital on Nov. 22, (his wife's birthday), and was discharged in a wheelchair from Sutter Rehabilitation Institute on Dec. 27 (his 60th birthday.) "You can't make up these dates, but I will never forget them," he reports. Joel is now focused on his journey to recovery. Part of his rehab includes participation in Renaissance's walking group.

The past few years, he has also focused on rekindling his high school Spanish language. Joel anticipates joining faculty and students from Sacramento State and Cal State Northridge on a Latin American Art tour to Mexico City in June. He wonders whether he might be the youngest member of the group.

In February of this year, he shared with Renaissance's Travel and Adventure class a slide show of his 1986 tour to China, where the focus

was on visits to Chinese factories. The presentation showed very basic, even primitive work spaces and machines being used in that era.

Joel serves as a member at large on Renaissance's Board of Directors, as well as being involved with the Friday Forums, Summer Program, Membership Committee and helping to coordinate the Spring semester Open House and Orientation.



**Renaissance Society**  
**FREE**

### **SUMMER PROGRAM** **Celebrating the Arts in Sacramento**

**June 6 "Art and Artists In and Of Sacramento"**  
Presenter: Art Luna. Location: On Campus, room To Be Announced (TBA)

**June 13 Lecture/Tour of Crocker Art Museum**  
Location: 216 O Street, Meet in the lobby of the Crocker Art Museum

**June 20 "Beyond the Barre: The Art & Training of Ballet at Sacramento Ballet,"** Location: 2420 N Street

**June 27 "Walls That Speak," Stan Padilla, Muralist,** Location: On campus, room TBA

**July 11 "Arts and Artificial Intelligence," Diego Bonilla** Location: On Campus, room TBA

**July 18 "Behind the Curtain," B Street Theatre**  
Location: 2700 Capitol Ave.

**July 25 "Midtown/Downtown Murals Trot and Spirits Hunt" – Phil Ho leader,** Meet at 12th and I Street outside Bangkok@12 Thai Restaurant, 9 am followed by optional lunch.

**August 1 "Behind the Scenes: What Really Happens Backstage,"** Tour and Presentation: Capital Stage, Location: 2215 J Street





# Celebrations of Cinco de Mayo in the U.S. and Mexico

*By Darryl O. Freeman*

There are arguably three important dates celebrated in the United States annually in the month of May. Cinco de Mayo, observed on May 5th, Mother's Day is celebrated on May 11th this year and May 26th this year is recognized as Memorial Day.

Mother's Day is recognized as an appreciation of mothers, their undying love and the reason we all exist. Memorial Day in the United States is a federal holiday observed on the last Monday of May to honor and remember military personnel who have died while serving in the U.S. Armed Forces. It was established after the Civil War to commemorate fallen soldiers. Over time, it evolved to recognize all military members who lost their lives in service to the country.

Cinco de Mayo has evolved into a major celebration of Mexican-American culture in the United States. Cities with large Mexican-American populations, host grand festivals, parades, and cultural events. It is often mistakenly believed to be celebration of Mexico's Independence, which is actually celebrated in the country of Mexico on September 16th. In reality, Cinco de Mayo commemorates the Battle of Puebla in 1862, in which Mexican forces achieved an unlikely victory over the invading French army.

In Mexico, Cinco de Mayo is not a federal holiday and is primarily celebrated in the state of Puebla, where the famous battle took place. The city of Puebla holds reenactments, parades, and cultural performances to honor the event, recognizing the victory of General Ignacio Zaragoza and his troops. Schools and local governments may organize educational activities to teach about the historical importance of the battle, but outside of Puebla, the day is treated as a relatively minor holiday with limited public observance.

The misunderstanding in the U. S. likely stems from a general lack of knowledge about Mexican history outside of Mexico. While the victory at Puebla was an important symbolic moment in Mexico's fight against foreign intervention, it did not mark the country's independence. In fact, the French eventually regrouped and occupied Mexico City in 1863, installing Emperor Maximilian I as ruler for a

few years before Mexican forces ultimately regained control in 1867.

The widespread observance of Cinco de Mayo in the U.S. can be attributed to efforts in the 20th century to promote Mexican heritage and pride. While no single individual is recognized as the "founder" of Cinco de Mayo celebrations in the U.S, Mexican communities in California played a crucial role in initiating and maintaining its observance. One key group often credited with popularizing Cinco de Mayo in the U.S. is the Latino civil rights activists of the Chicano Movement in the 1960s and 1970s. They used the holiday to promote Mexican-American identity and culture.

Later, businesses, particularly beer and food companies, helped commercialize the celebration, making it more mainstream across the U.S. Today, the holiday is used as an opportunity to highlight Mexican American history, traditions, and contributions to American society.

Cinco de Mayo serves as an important cultural celebration, particularly in the United States, where it has taken on a broader role in honoring Mexican-American identity and heritage. Understanding the true meaning of Cinco de Mayo can help prevent misconceptions and promote a deeper appreciation for the rich history and culture of Mexico and Mexican Americans.



## Note From Daughter of Deceased Renaissance Member, Gerry Camp

*By Amy Camp*

I am writing on behalf of all of Gerry's four children to share what a difference a membership with the Renaissance Society made in our Dad's life. I know for a fact that the seminars that he participated in, and especially those that he led, enhanced his life beyond measure.

I am so glad that Dad found a venue to continue exploring new ways to expand his lifelong love of literature, theater, and music.

Dad came to live with me over five years ago and from day one, I experienced some of the content of the entertaining seminars that he participated in via zoom. Unintentionally, these became a part of my weekly routine as well as his. (Those who knew him know that he made the most of his hearing challenges which often meant the volume was usually quite loud!)

As I got ready to go to work I could hear Chip Zempel's strong voice booming from down the hallway as he discussed something that had significance in that day's film seminar.

In the evenings at dinner, he often wanted to share with me his thoughts that he experienced while reading a book they were discussing in Louise DiMattio's seminar and I often heard him doing the same with the seminar participants.

We had great fun when he asked if the song he was excited to share for that week's theme in the Music of your Life seminar was going to be relatable to the theme. (It was known that if it wasn't, his go-to would be to make a Willie Nelson song work!)

I was often touched as well as amazed (and sometimes annoyed when he would forget to eat!) at his sincere commitment to creating a seminar that would bring to the participants just a sliver of the passion he felt for that seminar's chosen topic.

The amount of research, writing, and re-writing that went into his "lesson plans" was astounding! Seminar topics such as Ebert's Greatest Films, Movies of Hitchcock, Movies of Spielberg,

Shakespeare in the Movies, and his all-time favorite-Hamlet-became his life for months on end.

In fact, the day before he passed, Dad had his laptop, DVDs, and binder full of notes spread out in front of him on the hospital side table- as he got ready to deliver, the "Shakespeare You Don't Know" seminar the following week.

Renaissance gave him purpose, passion, education, hopefulness and especially, cherished friends-- that he looked forward to seeing every week.

I invite members to donate to Renaissance Society in Gerry's honor, by check mailed to 6000 J St., Mail Stop 6074, Sacramento, CA, 95819 or online at <https://www.csus.edu/college/social-sciences-interdisciplinary-studies/renaissance-society/spotlights/donate.html>



## Join Retired Public Employees Association

*By Chuck Wiseley*

Worried about your public pension in these uncertain times? Join us in the fights to preserve public retiree benefits by becoming active in the **Retired Public Employees Association. RPEA** represents all public employees (e.g., classified school staff, public agencies, etc.).

We encourage members to attend our monthly meetings where we discuss issues and events such as planned member fun events, upcoming elections, and future retiree benefits (including proposed legislation that limits or endangers benefits and current court proceedings).

Meetings are fun and informative and a delicious hot breakfast or lunch is also available (\$10 member cost). Contact Diane Buffington at (916) 307-8228 to get the next meeting details. For more information visit [www.rpea.com](http://www.rpea.com).

Join Today!



# Trump Administration Cuts Funding for Alzheimer's Studies at UC Davis

But funding for the study highlighted in last month's Recorder is safe.

*By Jim Hodges, Recorder Editor*

Last month's Recorder included an announcement that "The UC Davis Alzheimer's Disease Research Center (ADRC) is seeking volunteers" for an Alzheimer's study. But on April 10, "CalMatters" reported that the Trump administration has cut federal funding for many dementia studies funded by the federal National Institute of Health (NIH), cuts which include UC Davis.

We contacted ADRC and asked if these cuts included the study highlighted in the Recorder.

*"Luckily, this study is not included in the removal of funding by the NIH," responded Martha Forloines, Director of Clinical Research at UC Davis Alzheimer's Disease Research Center. "This study is funded by the Alzheimer's Association and the Alzheimer's Drug Discovery Foundation. So regardless of what happens with the federal funding for research, this study is safe. We do however, have other studies that have been impacted which is what they [CalMatters] are likely sharing."*

CalMatters reports, "The UC's 10 campuses receive more than \$2 billion in research funding from the [NIH] agency and account for nearly a tenth of all academic research in the country."

<https://calmatters.org/education/higher-education/2025/04/health-research/>



## Dining Together May

*By Cheryl Nelson*

Dining Together will meet on  
Wednesday, May 14, 2025, at 5:30 PM at

**Wildwood Kitchen**

556 Pavilions Ln.

(<https://www.wildwoodpavilions.com>)

for **outdoor dining**



Please bring cash (including small bills) as checks will be by table.

Parking is available.

RSVP to Cheryl Nelson, [slynnsearch@yahoo.com](mailto:slynnsearch@yahoo.com)

no later than May 7, 2025. Seating is limited.

You will receive a confirmation email if space is available.



## Speak Your Mind, Share Your Stories, Dazzle Us With Your Knowledge

*By Deborah Seiler*

Renaissance has talent, and it is YOU! Applications to teach for the Fall Semester have been sent and are due **June 2**.

Yes, you can do it! Start with a one-time presentation or offer a 3, 6, or 12 week seminar. Launch your own Shared Interest Group on a favorite topic. Don't be afraid. Our Tech Committee can help you with logistics.

Contact Lorene Sarne in the Renaissance Office for an application if you don't have one: [Lorne.sarne@csus.edu](mailto:Lorne.sarne@csus.edu)



# How We Can Help Sac State Students In These Times?

*By Deborah Seiler*

We ran this announcement in the March 2025 issue of this newsletter.

Since then, several of you have asked me about it as we ponder what we can do to help students, especially those from diverse backgrounds. In general, our members consider it important that all students, regardless of their situation or identity, feel safe, empowered, and capable of achieving their academic and personal goals.

At an event with President Luke Wood, some of us asked him what we might do to help. President Wood suggested our members, individually or with a friend, drop by the various Affinity Centers on campus just to say hello and express support.

Our liaison with the university heartily endorsed this approach.

Since that time, at least six students have had their visas to study at Sac State revoked. We don't know why or who they are. We assume they will be deported. Our support is more critical than ever.

Please consider dropping by when you are on campus just to say hello and remind students how much we care. Some of us have brought cookies or other treats to express our support, much to the recipients' delight.

## THANK YOU FOR CARING

<b>Affinity Center Name</b>	<b>Location</b>
<b>APIDA Student Center</b> Asian Pacific Islander Desi American	<b>Lassen Hall, 2200 (8 am – 5 pm)</b>
<b>Dreamer Resource Center</b>	<b>River Front Center, 1022 (8 am – 5 pm)</b>
<b>Esak'tima Center</b>	<b>Lassen Hall, 1100 (8 am – 5 pm)</b>
<b>Guardian Scholars Program</b>	<b>Sacramento Hall, 118 (8:30 am – 5 pm)</b>
<b>Jewish Life and Resource Center</b>	<b>Modoc Hall, 1010 (NA)</b>
<b>Martin Luther King Jr. Center</b>	<b>Lassen Hall, 2201 (9 am – 5 pm)</b>
<b>Multi-Cultural Center</b>	<b>University Library, 1010 (8 am – 5 pm)</b>
<b>Pride Center</b>	<b>University Union, 2230 (8 am – 5 pm)</b>
<b>Project Rebound</b>	<b>Sacramento Hall, 152 (NA)</b>
<b>Serna Center</b>	<b>River Front Center, 1023 (8 am – 5 pm)</b>
<b>Southwest Asian and North African Center (SWANA)</b>	<b>Academic Information Resource Center (AIRC) building, 1012 (9 am—5 pm)</b>
<b>Women's Resource Center</b>	<b>University Union, 2250 (8 am—5 pm)</b>
<b>Veteran's Success Center</b>	<b>Lassen Hall, 2302 (8 am—5 pm)</b>



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June Submissions Due: May 2

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## **Spring Celebration and BBQ**

*By Allan Keown*

Come celebrate the end of the Spring Semester, the end of Deborah Seiler's third term as President, with all the folks who make Renaissance hum.

**WHEN:** Sunday, June 15, 4 pm.  
**WHERE:** Arden Park, 1000 La Sierra Drive.  
**WHAT:** Renaissance will supply burgers and veggie burgers, water, ice, dessert, and music.  
**BRING:** Your favorite side dish if able (vegetarian or vegan preferred) with ingredients labeled, your own adult beverages or sodas, a lawn chair if you want to sit on the grassy area.

**Come for the food...stay for the celebration!**

