President’s Corner
By David Abelson
My warmest greetings to all of you - Well this has certainly been a very stressful time for everyone! To help refocus our attention onto something positive, I would like to give you an update about some of the exciting things the Renaissance Society is doing to provide meaningful life-long learning opportunities during the challenging months ahead.

Here are just a few examples.

I. Our Outstanding RS Summer Program Is Approaching Soon
Because of the need for "social-distancing," the RS Programs team is actively preparing an outstanding series for you to enjoy on-line this summer. This will include many fascinating topics and speakers, with the opportunity for you to actively participate from the comfort of your own home. We will keep you regularly informed about "when, where and how" to join the RS Summer Series, and you may even get some delicious early samples to whet your appetite.

Meanwhile, our Technology team is gearing up to assist RS members who would like to learn more about how to use the new interactive tools like Zoom. These tools can make on-line learning easy and really fun, so this will be yet another life-long learning opportunity for all of us to enjoy together. In addition, our Communications team will be working closely with our summer speakers to ensure that their presentations are fast-paced and enjoyable for everyone.

II. Many Other Important Events and Opportunities Are Just Around the Corner
In addition to the Summer Series, there are many other important RS events that are coming up quickly. For example, our most recent Membership Directory was distributed in early April, and you will soon be learning about new ways to connect with your RS friends, and others, even though we still can’t get together with each other in-person.

In May our annual RS Scholarships (worth $3,000 each) will be awarded to seven outstanding CSUS students. Also in May, members will be able to “vote-by-mail” in the annual election for new members and officers to serve on next year’s Board of Directors. In June, with the Summer Series in full swing, you’ll be able to renew your RS membership for next year. In addition, we will keep you fully up-to-date on all the important RS news and events through regular Constant Contact messages and other announcements as well.

III. The RS Program for Next Fall
Some members are asking whether RS has decided to cancel all on-campus classes for the fall semester. The short answer is “no,” so let me clarify the facts. Currently, we simply don’t know whether the CSUS campus will be open next autumn, though we certainly hope that it will be. Because of this uncertainty, our RS teams are pursuing a “dual track” approach in planning for the fall semester.

On track one, we intend to take all steps necessary to ensure that our programs can safely return to the campus (and other public places) in the autumn if that is possible. For example, we have already requested rooms from CSUS, and our Fall Catalogue is being prepared for its normal release date later this summer.

On track two, we are identifying teachers and subjects that will lend themselves well to on-line learning. We view the upcoming Summer Series as an excellent opportunity to refine our remote-learning capabilities, so that RS can “scale-up” for a much larger on-line program next fall, if necessary.

IV. A Few Final Thoughts
While the RS Office is physically closed for the remainder of this semester, our two part-time staff members will continue to work from home. They will also go to the office occasionally to pick up essential mail, bills and other needed information.

For this reason, please review the periodic RS updates you’ll be receiving, along with the information provided on our RS website, to find answers to most of your questions. However, if you have an extremely urgent question and can’t find an answer, you can send an email message to our RS Office Administrator, Shari Lowen. She will try to get back to you as soon as possible, though this may take a few days. Shari’s email address is Shari.Lowen@CSUS.edu. (Again, please contact Shari only if it is truly urgent.)

Last but not least, I want to thank each RS member for your genuine commitment to life-long learning. For decades, the Renaissance Society has played a vital role in this regard, and we intend to continue to do so for many more years to come!

Please stay well, stay connected, and above all stay involved! Best wishes to all of you. David
The Renaissance Nominating Committee, following the Bylaws of the Renaissance Society, is pleased to present the following slate of eligible candidates for the 2020-2022 Board of Directors.

NOTE: At the RS Board meeting on April 13, in light of the current restrictions on large gatherings, the RS Board of Directors adopted the following election guidelines, as allowed in Section VI.D of the Society’s bylaws:

1. This year’s election shall be by mail.
2. Electronic ballots shall be used to the maximum extent feasible.
3. Mail-in ballots will be used when otherwise necessary.

Voting will begin May 1, 2020 via online voting and/or mail-in ballots. Voting deadline and ballot submissions to be completed by May 15.

**President: Ken Cross**

I graduated from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, NY in 1974 with a BS degree in civil engineering. I served as an airborne, ranger, armor U.S. Army officer for ten years. During the next decade I was a financial planner, sales manager, and corporate sales trainer serving career military service members. For the last twenty years prior to retirement, I served in the nonprofit/social sector as the Spiritual Life Center Church Development Officer followed by twelve years as CEO of Habitat for Humanity of Greater Sacramento.

I joined the Renaissance Society in the spring of 2016. This is my eighth semester as a seminar leader and ninth semester as a Gerontology mentor. Over the last two years, I have served as a RS Board Member-at-Large and on the following RS committees and programs: Ad Hoc Governance, Ambassadors, Communications & Marketing, Finance & Administration, Forum, Long Range Planning, Resource Development, and chairperson of the MDCE (Membership, Diversity, and Community Engagement) Committee. My key talents are leadership, creativity, communications and global thinking. I hope to share my experience gained serving on numerous nonprofit boards including Women’s Empowerment, the Sacramento Housing Alliance, the AIDS Housing Alliance, and the Sacramento Regional Coalition to End Homelessness.

**Vice President: Barbara Davis-Lyman**

My adult life has been spent helping others to “level the playing field” for children and families: As a founding member of WEAVE; teaching the first Headstart class in California; working as a consultant in the migrant camps. I taught at Sacramento City College for 40 years where I had the privilege to serve as President of the Academic Senate, President of the Los Rios Academic Senate as well as on the California Academic Senate Board, ending my career with an appointment from the Governor to the Community College Board of Governors as well as California Postsecondary Education Commission.

Renaissance Society has many members with incredible backgrounds—a “sleeping giant” of talents who are willing to serve in positions which help to strengthen our communities for the common good such as at CSUS: the Food Pantry, Scholarships, and Gerontology Programs.

I understand the complexities of “board-personship,” the need to have an uncanny sense of timing, listening, communication, and collaborative skills, connections, ability to take risks, and a willingness to show up and speak out, to provide open forums to help to develop consensus confronting issues with a positive spirit that produces resolution rather than divisiveness.

Being a member of a group who believes in “Lifelong Learning and Service” with a missionary zeal is energizing and I have enjoyed serving on the Scholarship, Resource Development, 19th Amendment Committees and this year Chairing the Forum Committee. I would look forward to serving as Vice President on the Renaissance Board.
Controller: Norv Wellsfry
In my professional career, I acquired the financial and managerial skills that are particularly relevant to the Controller position. In addition to teaching Accounting and Computer Information Science, I held a number of administrative positions that utilized my analytical, financial and accounting skills. Most recently as the Vice-President of the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, I had primary responsibilities for assessing the financial strength, effectiveness, and integrity of community colleges in the West. I have been a board member and officer in a number of community and professional organizations at the local, State, and national level and served as President in both State and National organizations. I understand the skills and attitudes needed to make an organization like Renaissance strong and relevant to its members. During my membership in Renaissance, I have made numerous presentations and developed and led Seminars on the Middle East. I am an At-Large Member of the Renaissance Board of Directors and am an active member of the Finance and Administrative, Seminar, Resource Development, and Long Range Planning Committees. I also volunteer with several community organizations.

Secretary: Bob Benedetti
My wife and I joined Renaissance when we moved to Sacramento from Stockton. There we had participated in the OLLI program at the University of the Pacific. Prior to that we lived in Sarasota, Florida where I was a lecturer and board member at the Sarasota Institute of Lifetime Learning (SILL). The vibrant and diverse offerings Renaissance provides, including the Forums, have delighted us. My wife and I have taken several classes from poetry to water policy. I have offered four classes, two on the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and two on American history and politics with a co-convener, Ron Limbaugh. My career has been in higher education. I served as a faculty member and Dean of the College at the University of the Pacific for 24 years. Currently I am a Research Associate at the Center for California Studies, CSUS. I bring experience with higher education curriculum, adult education, and university administration to the Renaissance Board. I hope to continue to help address the several challenges Renaissance faces including online learning, community partnerships, and the growing demand for services in our region.

Members-at-Large (MAL) Nominees (two year term) July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2022
Christie Braziel I am a happily retired, active senior, grateful to be healthy and blessed with numerous opportunities for lessons and growth of my physical, mental, emotional and spiritual dimensions. I thrive on being of service to my community on a variety of levels. I am a lifelong student and value being involved with the eclectic opportunities for learning that the Renaissance Society (RS) provides. Besides being a seminar leader facilitating the Walking Meditations Using a Labyrinth, I am also a volunteer golf mentor at a local golf course, to women who are new to the game, to help them feel comfortable navigating the game and all it offers. (This is not a RS program).
As a graduate of CSUS in 1974 with a Bachelor of Arts in Drama, I am particularly nostalgic with every visit to the CSUS campus moving among the old and new, buildings and students all around, while continuing my educational learning. Giving back to the organizations that support my values, like the Renaissance Society, is a particular joy and stepping up to participate on the Board of Directors helps achieve that goal. I look forward to helping the Renaissance Society meet its objectives and continue this legacy of learning and partnership for all of Sacramento’s citizens while also offering a wonderful venue to meet new friends and socialize during this precious chapter of our lives.

W. Charles “Chuck” Wiseley, Ed.D. For nearly 40 years, I provided educational research, authored numerous publications, often with co-authors, and developed educational accountability systems in collaboration with committees of stakeholders. I was instrumental in the design of accountability systems for state and federal Accountability Acts as well as influencing the educational accountability frameworks through participation in local, state and national committees.

My work in college research offices and at the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s office provides a unique and in-depth understanding of college structures, organizations, policies and policy making. I participated in and led numerous state, college, university, and national stakeholder committees assembled for both policy development and implementation.

I have an AA, BA and MA in Sociology and a Doctorate in Higher Education Leadership. I authored and coauthored numerous publications on community college practice, policy and impacts for students demonstrating my understanding of educational structures and processes. My research on effective strategies for instructional methods includes innovations such as Accelerated, Contextual, and Project-based learning. My love of learning and sharing knowledge will make me a valuable Member at Large.
Deborah Seiler - I am married with two grown sons, an employment attorney and a firefighter, both living in Sacramento. My husband Jim and I enjoy our 11-year-old granddaughter as well as our sons’ girlfriends’ daughters who are seven and three. Having grown up in Chico, CA, I studied there as well as in Vienna, Austria and at UC Berkeley. During graduate studies, I was a summer research fellow for the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Washington, D.C., and later served as an advisor to the Federal Election Commission. Nearly my entire career was spent in election administration, both in the public sector for state and county government and in the private sector working for election printing and voting machine companies. I served as March Fong Eu’s first female Chief of the Elections and Political Reform Division, as Chief Consultant to the Assembly Elections and Reapportionment Committee, and as registrar of voters in Solano and San Diego counties. During my time in the private sector I wrote and published a monthly newsletter, served as a member of the California Fair Political Practices Commission, and chaired a committee to reorganize and partially rewrite the state Elections Code. I later chaired or co-chaired committees dealing with election-related legislation and election petitions. I currently enjoy Renaissance Society, two book clubs, a group devoted to non-partisan voter education for college-age students, gardening, and walking my hound dog, Elvis. I look forward to this new challenge as the Renaissance Society transitions to meet the needs of a changing world.

Member -at-Large (MAL) Nominee (one year term) July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021

Susan George - I have been a member of Renaissance since 2013. It has been a joy and a privilege to meet and interact with others who embody the concept of lifelong learning. I have lived the concept of lifelong learning, having earned a Bachelor of Arts in Social Work and Master of Science in Health Services Administration after raising my family. I was one of the founders of a safe house for battered women and suicide hot line in the Wyoming town where my husband and I raised our family. I also served as President of the Board for that organization. My work in Sacramento has been in the geriatric health field. I worked as a social worker for seniors in the skilled nursing setting, serving on the Sutter Ethics Committee. As a Community Resource Specialist, I have provided services to family caregivers. Currently, as an Ambassador for the Renaissance Speakers Bureau on the Membership Diversity and Community Engagement Committee, I have had the opportunity to reach out to others in the community who might also benefit by participating in Renaissance.

Renaissance Scholarship Made A Difference

By Nancy Findeisen

Lily Yang, the first in her Hmong-American family to attend college, is about to graduate from Sacramento State with the help of a Renaissance Society scholarship. Lily has worked part-time during her college years, but her dream of becoming a Nurse Practitioner was nearly derailed last year due to financial difficulties. Read in Lily’s own words how her Renaissance scholarship made the difference between leaving college and graduating this year.

“Graduation is quickly on its way and I'm so excited for it. I want to thank Renaissance Society again for giving me this opportunity to receive this scholarship. It means so much to me to have gotten this scholarship because last year I was at a point in my life where I wanted to give up. I was struggling financially and was afraid that I'd have to take a pause on my education so that I could support myself. "This scholarship made a difference… I was able to continue my education and not have to worry about my financial needs. It took a huge burden off my shoulders, and I cannot thank the Renaissance Society enough. I appreciate everything that the Renaissance Society does for students like me. Thank you!"

You can help other students like Lily by contributing to the Renaissance Society Scholarship Fund. Donate online by credit card at: https://tinyurl.com/RenaissanceFunds. Donate by mailing checks made out to University Foundation at Sacramento State, with Scholarship in the menu line to Renaissance Society, 6000 J Street, MS 6074, Sacramento, CA, 95819-6074.
With Special Thanks to Our Donors.
July 1 2019 - March 31 2020

These Donor lists are based on Sacramento State University Foundation records. If you have donated to a Renaissance fund and you are not listed, please contact Nancy Findeisen, (916-391-5046), nancy.findeisen@gmail.com, so we can correct our records and acknowledge your gift.

Carol and David Abelson, Diane and Julian Holt, Joyce Poirot
Anita Adams, Dolly and Leonard Hom, Gerald Powell
Janis Austin, Christine Hunter, Marie Powell
Susan and Robert Benedetti, Jack Jennings, Richard Rivera
Barbara Marie Bravos, Sharon Kaplan, Linda Rogaski
Janis Briggs, Allan Keown, Angelika Rooney
James Brown, Catherine and John Kirwan, Therese and Leland Ruth
Norma Brunsell, Mary Jane Koelzer, Nancy Samuelson
C. Russell Campbell, Bobbie and Daniel Koenigsberger, Louise Santana
Christopher Canine, Ann Kohl, Nancy Schoellkopf
Janice Chung, Linda Krebs, Otis Scott
Kenneth Cross, Jr., Martha Larkey, Richard Sickert
Kathleen Curtaz, Lawrence Layne, Jane and Donald Smith
Sharon Dauer, Steven Lilley, Kathy Spagnolo
Elaine DiPietro Pesce, Walter Malhoski, Carolyn Stewart
Linda Durkee, Rita and Leonard Marowitz, Irene Stone
Nancy and Kurt Findeisen, Shirley Mayfield, Anna Maria and Michael Storey
William Floyd, James McKelligon, Cindy and Tom Suchanek
Beverly and Donald Gerth, George Meyer, Gay and Paul Tanner
Kathy and Larry Glasmire, Anne Mintmier, Karen and Donald Taranto
Susan and Theodore Goodwin, Marilee Monagan, Barbara Thomas
Michael Greene, Elaine Myer, Brian Toole
Matthew Hancock, Jennifer Nelson, Grace Valentine
Eileen Heaser, Cynthia and Greg Nicholson, George Waegell
Janice and Mark Heckey, Christine Nolan, David Warren
L. Hoffelt, Deborah Nolan, Robert Wissmath
Angela Hokanson, Marcia Palmer, Alice Woodside

Honoring Special Women

During Women’s History Month in March, Renaissance members honored women who were special to them with a donation to the Renaissance Special Program Fund. We are proud to honor these women and thank the donors for their generosity. Honorees are listed followed by the donor.

Honorees

Anna Carey Conner, Patricia Pavone
Fern Vera Dunlap Cummings, Jennifer Cummings
Nancy McFadden, Delores Eitel
Kiyosato, Susan Osborn
Margaret Fredericka Tiessen Waegell, George Waegell

Renaissance Member Scholarship Program

Offers financial assistance for members needing help with annual membership fees.

Donors

December 1, 2019 - March 31, 2020

Barbara Davis-Lyman
Beth Griffith
Mary Jane Koelzer
Richard Pitcher
In Memoriam

Arthur Lester German, longtime RS member, passed February 26, 2020. Mr. German had moved to Walnut Creek in 2017 and passed away there. He will be remembered for his weekly column in the Sacramento Bee's section titled "Neighbors" in which he interviewed folks who lived in his neighborhood. The Renaissance Society is grateful for the generous donation of $2,000 to the Scholarship Fund from Arthur’s estate.

Michael Fallon, passed March 6, 2020. Mr. Fallon died at 90. He loved reading and writing; he was a regular member of the Society's New Yorker discussion group. His career was as a journalist; he retired from the Sacramento Union where he had become the "dean" of California's education press corp.

Sandra Sanchez passed away on April 3. She joined RS in 2005. Her son wanted us to know how very important RS was to his mother.

Member Profile
By Judy A. Lewis

Linda Birner Created an LGBTQ Legacy Newspaper

Linda Birner’s life work enabled her to develop relationships with a number of prominent Sacramento and international figures. More importantly, she reports, she started a unique newspaper that not only educated the gay and straight community but provided a vehicle to improve the self-esteem of LGBTQs at a critical turning point in our country’s history.

Following her birth in Ft. Wayne, Indiana, her parents moved to an Ohio village called Timberlake, located in the woods near Lake Erie. In 1962, her father accepted a position at Aerojet and the family relocated to Sacramento.

After graduation from Mira Loma High School she earned a degree in psychology and journalism from CSUS. During her five years at CSUS, Linda lived and worked at a local veterinary hospital, where she handled animal emergencies at night. She was also a professional graphic artist and photographer. Linda’s political activism started early in her life as President of the local chapter of the National Organization for Women (NOW), a member of the local American Association of University Women (AAUW), plus membership with the National Women’s Political Caucus.

In 1978, compelled to alert the public of the dangers of the Briggs Initiative, a ballot proposition designed to remove all gay and lesbian teachers from California schools, she started the Sacramento newspaper—“Mom, Guess What?” (MGW). The newspaper focused on issues important to both gay individuals and the general public.

One of her early mentors was C.K McClatchy of the Sacramento Bee. She had reached out to C.K. because she wanted to model her paper after the Bee. He finally agreed and met her weekly at the Rosemont Grill, offering his advice on content, layout, editing and advertising. Linda subsequently developed a close personal relationship with C.K., who invited her to boat with him at his Lake Tahoe home, as a guest at his San Francisco home and to travel with him to South America. Sadly, he died while jogging in South Land Park in 1989.

Another of Linda’s strongest supporters was former Sacramento Mayor Ann Rudin, who was instrumental in the Sacramento City Council’s passage of the Domestic Partnership Ordinance. Mayor Rudin also spearheaded a 1992 city proclamation highlighting the MGW newspaper. Linda became close friends with Sacramento Mayor Phil Isenberg and his wife as the result of her paper. Sacramento Police Chief John Kearns became acquainted with Linda when he and his wife purchased a Schnauzer puppy from her, visiting her home each evening to play with the pup until he grew big enough to go home with them. This paved the way for her later participation with the police department on behalf of the LGBTQ community.

Supervisor Sandy Smoley was a strong supporter of Linda’s newspaper and became a lifelong friend. Airline executive Richard Branson flew Linda to London as part of a project to promote London tourism for LGBTQ travelers.

Linda emphasizes that her newspaper was one of the premier gay newspapers in the United States. She stresses that it differentiated itself as a comprehensive “legitimate newspaper” featuring articles on local political issues, as well as the arts, pets, sports, entertainment, travel, book reviews and restaurants. MGW “survived for over 30 years due to the robust support of a wide variety of advertisers who recognized the value of the primary constituency that read the newspaper.”
The Renaissance Society Ambassadors
Sharing the Renaissance Society
“Fountain of Youth”

The Renaissance Society Membership, Diversity, and Community Engagement (MDCE) Committee conducted a Membership Campaign in 2018-2019 for the first time in the 32-year history of the adult lifelong learning organization.

One of the campaign lessons learned was the need for a media message/slideshow to share the Renaissance Society (RS) story. RS members Ruth-Marie Chambers, Muffy Francke, Mike Agron, Jeff Rubin, and Ken Cross formed a work group named The Jeff Rubin Project after team leader Jeff Rubin. The team created a slideshow overview of the Renaissance Society.

When the media message project was completed, the working group pondered “What are our next steps?” The team conducted a brief RS member Constant Contact survey in November 2018. Over 210 members responded – approximately 10% of our Renaissance Society membership. From this uniquely high response rate, over sixty members volunteered that they might be interested in volunteering as Ambassadors to help share the Renaissance Society message. In February 2019, the first of three calendar year 2019 Ambassador organizing meetings were held with thirteen prospective Ambassadors attending.

Probably the most “active RS recruiter” title is a “tie race” between Civil War seminar leader Doug Bonetti and RS member/retired nurse Dolores Eitel. Doug gives monthly Civil War luncheon presentations recruiting for Renaissance and his annual Spring Civil War seminar. We’ve lost count on Doug’s presentations at 15 SIRs (Sons In Retirement) and myriad other community events. Dolores Eitel estimates that she has distributed over 300 RS pamphlets, one-on-one, and in groups of 5-12 people. Dolores has done five 15-minute Renaissance Society membership talks during the Fall 2019 semester. At her presentation at the Eskaton retirement community in August 2019, Dolores handed out a brochure to all 71 attendees following her five-minute talk.

Sometimes members ask: “Why is the Renaissance Society trying to grow?” The answer is this is not about numbers. As Board Member-at-Large Muffy Francke says “this is about them, not us.” The “them” are aging adults who have not heard about the Renaissance Society’s programs for adult lifelong learning, socializing, service, and fun. Countless research studies show that relationships and personal connections are critical for aging well in our American society. Isolation advances the aging process. We are committed to giving everyone in our greater Sacramento community the opportunity to hear about the “fountain of youth” called the Renaissance Society.

The Ambassadors conducted over fifty speaking and tabling events in 2019 making contact with over a thousand prospective RS members. Community engagements have been diverse including, to name a few: the Sacramento Black Book Fair, the Arden Arcade Rotary Club, quarterly Eskaton Inside Track events at Arden Mall, the Philanthropic Education Organization (PEO), the Sunrise Tech English as a Second Language (ESL) class, the Widowed Persons Association, the LGBTQ Elders Meetup Group, Kaiser Physicians’ Health & Wellness monthly meetings, Roseville’s Fifty And Better (FAB) Club, Senior Resource Fairs at the Carmichael Mission Oaks Community Center and Senior Center of Elk Grove, Hart Senior Pride Fair, Genovese Burford & Brothers "Retire Well" Symposium, the annual MLK360 Diversity Expo, the Heritage Solaire Health Fair, and the Spiritual Life Center (SLC) Men’s Group.

The RS Ambassadors are actively looking for speaking and tabling events to share our opportunities for adult lifelong learning, socializing, service, and fun.

If you want to get more information, have an event suggestion, or wish to discuss the possibility of volunteering as an Ambassador, please contact Ken Cross, MDCE Committee chairperson at ken-cross@kencrossconsulting.com or phone (916) 995-8288.

The Three Ambassadors
Dolores Eitel, Susan George, Christie Braziel
(Photo courtesy of Ruth-Marie Chambers)

Our Election Process This Year

Because of the current physical distancing guidelines, our election this year will be by mail. See Page 2 in this issue for details and Pages 2 through 4 for the candidates’ slate. As in all elections your votes are exceedingly important this year! Watch for more information coming your way soon.
Annual Election

Renaissance Board of Directors

Our election process will change this year. Please note the changes. Please vote!

See Page 2

Watch for detailed information coming through Constant Contact.