RENAISSANCE SOCIETY
SACRAMENTO STATE

THE RENAISSANCE RECORDER

California State University, Sacramento

Lifelong Learning Since 1986

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President

The Renaissance Society
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Renaissance Website:
https://csus.edu/rensoc

Key Dates

Thursday, Oct. 1
Sac State STEM Scholar Lecture Series presentation by Assistant Professor Erica Orcutt
Sequoia Hall,Room 301
6 to 7 pm

October 2
First Friday Pizza

Monday, October 1
Application to Teach Opens for Spring 2027

Friday, Oct. 16
Sac State Facilities Management Golf Tournament
Teal Bend Golf Club
7 am to 12 pm

Saturday, October 24
Program Leaders Workshop

WE'RE BACK!

by Jackie Lamb

Hopefully you have been enjoying the classes and speakers you selected for this semester. And have successfully found your way around the campus, after only one or two wrong turns!!!

In order to make your membership in the Renaissance Society even better are a variety of other activities which are in person allowing members to be become acquainted and make new friends. Researchers and physicians have been reporting that loneliness among senior citizens is a serious issue. So heeding this advice your Board of Directors and Committee chairs are planning and offering more in person opportunities to you.

Please, when you are having lunch on campus find the table with the other folks with their white Renaissance badges and mostly grey hair. We want you to join us so don't be shy!

A reception for our new members was held on Monday, **September 28th from 5:00 to 7:00**. This event was for Renaissance Leadership to meet and talk with new members from both the Spring and Fall semesters. Hopefully new friendships were made and new members felt more connected to the Renaissance Society.

A project on Democracy has been planned and will be open to students faculty and our members. This project has come about due to some special funding. We have been meeting with the University to develop workshops, panel discussions, podcasts around Democracy and the Declaration of Independence and the US Constitution. These presentations are currently scheduled for **Wednesday September 30th.** They will be held on campus. Watch for more information in the Weekly Update. The project has an objective for **intergenerational participation** around these topics.

The culmination of the Democracy project will be held on Friday, **October 23rd from 5:30 - 7:30** at the Capitol Radio Event Center in downtown Sacramento. The speaker will be **Neal Katyl** the lawyer who won the recent Supreme Court decision on Birthright Citizenship. Mr. Katyl has appeared in 50 Supreme Court cases. He will be speaking on the Declaration of Independence and the US Constitution as a foundation for today's Democracy. Watch for the Eventbrite registration for this event. It will include drinks and appetizers prior to the speaker.

A subcommittee is also working on developing podcasts around these same issues. Watch for later announcements about when and how to listen to these sessions.

SAVE THE DATE: NOVEMBER 12TH FOR OUR HOLIDAY CELBRATION. "HOLIDAY CABARET" It will be in the early afternoon with drinks and small plates plus entertainment by music, theater and dance students plus a few of our talented members. Watch for additional information in the Weekly Update

The pictures shown on pages 6 & 7 were taken at various events, including lunch, showing our members having fun and connecting with one another. We hope to see you at one of our activities.

To Use or Not to Use: Adapting to Consumer Technology

by Darryl Freeman

As a youngster, I marveled at comic-strip detective Dick Tracy's ability to communicate with headquarters through his wristwatch. I also remember the considerably less glamorous experience of searching for a telephone booth and hoping I had enough change to call home if I was running late or needed help. Today, Tracy's famous watch can hardly compete with an ordinary smartphone. The camera offers another example. We once took pictures with single-lens reflex cameras, delivered rolls of film to a store and waited days for the results. Now a phone can take, edit, print and send our photographs almost instantly.

These changes have given us extraordinary convenience. Yet I have friends and neighbors who, while appreciating that convenience, struggle with the complexity, privacy risks and social pressures that accompany modern consumer technology. Some use only the basic calling functions of their phones. They do not text, retrieve voicemail or use applications, and as a result, they sometimes lose contact with friends who assume that everyone communicates in the same way. Their phones may be 'smart,' but the relationship between user and device is often uneasy.

Cellphone ownership by itself can therefore give us a misleading picture. A 2025 Pew Research Center survey found that 98 percent of adults ages 50 to 64 owned a cellphone, as did 95 percent of those 65 and older. Smartphone ownership was lower: 90 percent among adults ages 50 to 64 and 78 percent among those 65 and older. Those figures suggest that who owns a device, are substantially different than those who can comfortably use its many features. Access to technology is not the same as proficiency, confidence or trust. (*Source: Pew Research Center, Mobile Fact Sheet, 2025)*

There is also an important distinction between adopting and adapting. We adopt a device when we decide to acquire and use it. We adapt when we change our habits and learn how to function in the environment that has grown around it. That second challenge has become increasingly difficult because consumer technology no longer feels entirely optional. Banks, medical offices, airlines, restaurants and government agencies routinely direct us to websites, electronic portals, QR codes and phone applications. A person may prefer an in-person conversation or a printed form, only to discover that the organization has made the digital route the easiest one - or the only one.

Some resistance is undoubtedly caused by unfamiliarity, but it should not automatically be dismissed as stubbornness or an inability to learn. The rules keep changing. A familiar screen is redesigned after an update. Password requirements become more elaborate. A transaction may require a code sent to a second device. Instructions written by people who already understand the system can be bewildering to those encountering it for the first time. Even experienced users occasionally find themselves asking, 'Where did that button go?' The problem is not always the consumer. Sometimes the technology is simply poorly designed.

Privacy and security present another dilemma. To receive the benefits of a smartphone, users are regularly asked to surrender personal information: their location, contacts, purchasing habits, photographs or health information. At the same time, they are warned about identity theft, fraudulent messages and links that should never be opened. Older adults are told that technology is essential for staying connected, but they are also reminded that a single mistaken click can have serious consequences. Caution under those circumstances is rational, even when it limits use.

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Cost contributes to the digital divide as well. Participation may require not only the purchase of a device but also reliable internet service, subscription fees, replacement equipment and occasional technical assistance. Devices become obsolete, software support ends and perfectly usable products are discarded. For consumers concerned about household expenses or environmental waste, the demand to replace rather than repair can make technological 'progress' undesirable.

Social media illustrates both sides of the opportunity. It can reconnect families, sustain friendships and place vast stores of information within reach. It can also spread misinformation, encourage fraud and consume hours of attention. Artificial intelligence assistants add a newer concern. They can answer questions and simplify routine tasks, but their assured responses may be inaccurate, and their ability to learn our preferences raises questions about privacy and influence. Adapting wisely does not require accepting every new feature simply because it is available.

The answer is not to reject consumer technology or romanticize the inconvenience of the past. Few of us genuinely want to return to phone booths, paper maps or weeklong waits for photographs. Instead, we need a more humane approach to technological change. Manufacturers should design products with clearer instructions, consistent controls and meaningful privacy choices. Businesses and public agencies should preserve reasonable telephone, paper and in-person alternatives. Families, libraries, community organizations and universities can provide patient instruction without making learners feel embarrassed.

Ultimately, adapting to consumer technology should remain a choice about which tools improve our lives, not a test of whether we can keep pace with every new device and update. The goal is not to use technology merely because it exists. It is to use it thoughtfully, safely and on terms that allow people of every generation to remain connected without surrendering their independence. The modern challenge is learning how to live with technology while preserving the ability to live without any particular version of it.

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Friday Forums – October 2026

Oct. 2: **Steve Maviglio**, Owner, Forza Communications
Rob Stutzman, President, Stutzman Public Affairs
Navigating the November Ballot Measures

California voters face a dizzying number of measures on the November ballot. Two of Sacramento's leading political strategists talk about these initiatives – how they got on the ballot, the arguments for and against. Steve Maviglio is a Democratic strategist who has worked on more than a dozen statewide ballot measures, managed political campaigns and served as the Press Secretary to Gov. Gray Davis and three Speakers of the California Assembly. Rob Stutzman is founder and president of Stutzman Public Affairs, which specializes in campaigns, communications, crisis management and political advertising. He was Deputy Chief of Staff for Communications for Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger.

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Oct. 9: **Leslie Gielow Jacobs**, Anthony Kennedy Professor of Law, McGeorge Law School
US Supreme Court Review and Preview

Leslie Gieslow Jacobs is the Anthony Kennedy Professor of Law at McGeorge School of Law, University of the Pacific, where she is also the Executive Director of the Capital Center for Law and Policy. Professor Jacobs will discuss key cases decided, as well as issues and questions surrounding the United States Supreme Court during the 2025-26 term and in the upcoming 2026-term. She has written and commented extensively on constitutional law, government structures and individual rights, and served as a law clerk to US Supreme Court Associate Justice Lewis F. Powell, Jr.

Oct. 16: Chris Fusco, Executive Editor, Sacramento Bee
Marcos Breton, Community Outreach Director, Opinion Editor, Sacramento Bee
The Sacramento Bee: History, Impact and Headwinds

As the *Sacramento Bee* marks more than 169 years as Sacramento's leading source of news, *The Bee's* top editors will describe its past, present and future, including a video presentation featuring archival and current coverage. In a major community outreach effort, which includes hiring more reporters to cover city and suburban news, Executive Editor Chris Fusco and Opinion Editor Marcos Breton are meeting with community groups to discuss the Bee's history, its positive impact throughout the region, and the headwinds faced by news media in the digital age. They will describe how *The Bee* is adapting to provide comprehensive, relevant journalism in a changing media landscape.

Oct. 23: **Michael Delbar**, CEO, California Rangeland Trust
The Land that Sustains Us: Why California's Rangelands Matter

The Golden State is losing its working rangelands faster than most people realize. When those lands are developed, we lose more than open space. We lose the ability to produce food, support wildlife, filter water, store carbon, and reduce wildfire risk. In this talk, Michael Delbar, CEO of the California Rangeland Trust, will share what is driving this loss and why it is becoming harder for ranching families to stay on the land. He will also highlight how voluntary conservation is helping keep these landscapes intact and secure a brighter future, supporting both the land and the families who depend on it.

Oct. 30: **Zakary Adams**, Interpreter, California State Parks
The American River: Then and Now

Explore the American River through the lens of a camera, both past and present, with Zakary Adams, an interpreter and public educator for California State Parks. He will describe the settlements along the gold-rich river that transformed California's landscape and the challenges, successes, and stories of the people who built their lives along the winding river's banks. He will go back in time to the building of the valley's first railroad, Sacramento's earliest electrical power station, and the hidden towns under the surface of Folsom Lake. He currently works with interpretive staff at Folsom Lake State Recreation Area and Folsom Powerhouse State Historic Park.

A Special Thank You

And a Look Ahead to ThanksGIVEday

Before we ask for your support, we simply want to say thank you.

Over the years, Renaissance Society members have shown what it means to give back. Together, we have supported Sacramento State students through scholarships, our endowment, and the ASI Food Pantry.

Now we have a new challenge: to provide even more scholarships.

To do that, we need to grow our Renaissance Society Endowment Fund. The stronger our endowment becomes, the more opportunities we can provide for students in the years ahead.

That is what this year's ThanksGIVEday is about.

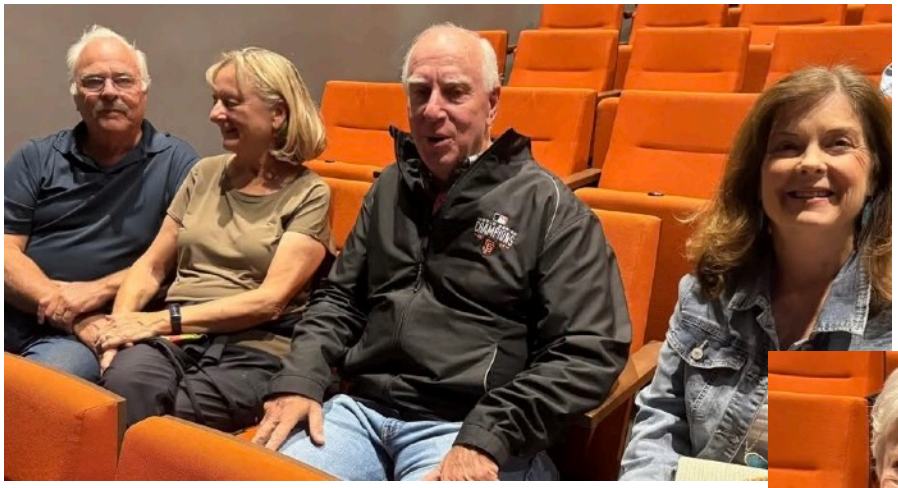
Every gift helps. Whether it is $10, $50, $100, or more, your contribution helps us move

Photo Gallery

Friends reuniting on campus

Members on campus connecting during lunchtime

Milo T presenting RS program at Fair Oaks Library



RS members enjoy concert at Sophia

RS members taking classes at Eskaton