

President's Message



Deborah Seiler

President

The Renaissance Society
of Sacramento

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

Key Dates

April 1

**Board of Directors
Meeting in person**

April 5

First Friday Pizza

April 8

**Voting Begins for the
Board of Directors**

April 19-20

Give Sac State Day

May 3

**Voting Ends for the Board
of Directors**

More on Gratitude and Taking Nothing for Granted

Last month I wrote to you during a power outage that reminded me to take nothing for granted. Today, I'm writing to you on California's Primary Election Day.

This is a day when we do not take our government or our rights as citizens for granted. Instead, we vote, serve on juries, work at the polls, and engage in political and civic activities. We continue to support civil rights for all. These acts of citizenship are vital to ensure that our civil society endures to serve us, our children, grandchildren, and future generations, regardless of the superficial differences we encounter. So, it is fitting that this month is a time to ask you two things.

First: Please vote in our upcoming Renaissance Society "election." I ask you to cast your votes for the committed members who offer their time and talents to support our society by serving on the Board of Directors. The officers are President, Vice President, Secretary, and Controller. Officers serve one-year terms and may run again.

The Board also includes six Member-at-Large (MAL) positions which are for two-year terms. Each year, three of the MAL positions are on the ballot.

Our By-Laws allow the voting to be conducted by email for members who are on our Constant Contact email list and by paper ballot for those who are not. These By-Laws require that one third (about 567) of our members (currently 1,700) must vote for the election to be valid. Although we call it an "election," candidates do not compete against one another. Members who wish to be considered for a Board position submit their written applications to a Nominating Committee which evaluates the applications, conducts interviews with the candidates, and proposes a slate to be approved by the Board.

Kudos to this year's Nominating Committee Chair Susan Brackenhoff and members Barbara Davis-Lyman and C. Ann Reed for their dedication and hard work. On March 12 the Board of Directors approved the slate they proposed

Second: Last month, I urged us not to take our Renaissance Society for granted. As a 99% volunteer organization, we depend on our members to serve on committees that recruit our program leaders and Forum speakers. We especially need help from members who are willing to learn to serve as technical hosts for the programs we offer on Zoom and in person with Zoom connections and recordings. We need volunteers to help recruit new members, particularly from younger and more diverse communities. Folks who have administrative, fiscal management, and fundraising skills are also in great demand. Social events need leadership and creative ideas.

Many hands make light work. We are attempting to break down some of these tasks into defined and manageable portions. Please see future entreaties and consider how your time and talent might contribute to this amazing organization and how your life and membership in Renaissance could be enriched by your involvement.

In gratitude for your membership,

Deborah



Renaissance Society 2024-2025 Board of Directors Nominees

Our Nominating Committee is pleased to present, in accordance with Renaissance Society bylaws, the following slate of eligible candidates. The Board of Directors agreed during their March 6 Board Meeting to once again follow the election guidelines established in Section VI.D of the Renaissance Society's Bylaws:

- 1) The election shall be by email for members who are on our Constant Contact email list. Email ballots shall be used to the maximum extent feasible.
- 2) Mail-in paper ballots will be used for those who are not on our email list and when otherwise necessary.

Please vote for President, Vice President, Controller, Secretary, and three Members-at-Large. Voting begins April 8, 2024. The deadline for voting is May 6, 2024.

Terms begin on July 1, 2024.

President: Deborah Seiler



It has been my honor to serve as your President for two, one-year terms. I am seeking a rather unprecedented third term due to the lack of eager candidates for this position.

During my one year as Vice President and my time as President I have attended nearly all committee and working

group meetings, organized three summer programs, wrote three Annual Reports, and actively participated in all our social functions.

During my first year as President, I streamlined meetings of the Board of Directors, advocated for more direct donation opportunities, supported efforts to collect demographic information about our membership, sought to increase membership, and hosted the first-ever Major Donor Recognition Event.

In my second year, I focused on diversifying our membership and programming, organized a "New Member" function, helped organize an All-Donor Recognition Event, and reached out to members of the new Sac State administration.

Efforts to diversify membership and programming are far from finished. As I lead a fourth summer program, the goal is once again to celebrate diverse communities in the Sacramento area and urge members of these communities to join our wonderful organization.

Thank you for trusting in me and supporting my leadership.

Vice President: Deanna Hanson



I recently retired after operating Hanson Consulting Group, a successful business and educational consulting practice, for over 35 years. My practice specialized in facilitating strategic planning and managing projects for many community-based

organizations, foundations, associations, educational and corporate entities. I conducted organizational assessments and evaluations and provided executive coaching for management team members. I often assumed responsibility for leading projects and initiatives for clients.

I have been involved in work with public high schools and equational organizations that helped improve student outcomes—which is a personal passion. This has included work associated with high school restructure, charter school development, and creating employer partnerships to provide real work experience for students.

From 2019-2022, I proudly served as Foreperson of the Sacramento County Grand Jury leading major investigative work which initiated major changes within public institutions in the County. A few of the many organizations that I have served are: President of Soroptimist International of Metropolitan Sacramento and chaired the Boards of Directors of the American Red Cross, Sacramento Chapter; and Sacramento State University's Trust Foundation.

Controller: David Ferguson



I am a CPA (inactive) with over 40 years of accounting experience.

After graduating from California State University, Fullerton with honors, I worked for an international accounting firm performing audits in multiple industries.

I left public accounting and went into private industry where I have been in a controllership position for various companies, including construction, consulting and electrical power.

My most recent accounting experience was with SMUD, where I worked for more than 15 years. I had responsibility for monthly financial operations statement and analysis along with other duties.

My wife, Janet, and I have two children, Adam and Kelsie and one grandchild, James. Janet and I enjoy travel. Last year we spent two weeks traveling to Egypt and Jordan. We also enjoy time with the grandchild and friends.

Secretary: Susan Brackenhoff



The Renaissance Society Secretarial position is vital to our organization. Concise and accurate minutes are essential when reviewing past meeting decisions and recording future plans. The Renaissance Society has monthly Board meetings with

minutes that are available to all members. I care deeply about the Renaissance Society and understand the importance of the volunteer leadership required to run an organization with almost 1800 members. To share my energy to the good of this cause, I have served as Renaissance Society Interim Vice-President, Board Secretary, Chair of the Nominating Committee, Chair of the Gerontology Committee, assisted with the fall and spring Open House and have been a presenter. This month the RS Nominating Committee submitted a proposed slate of officers after several months of recruiting, informing and interviewing candidates.

Renaissance Society has a special place in my heart

since I joined in 2014. My husband, Ken, and I moved to Sacramento in 2014 when he took a position here and I basically retired at that time. I had been at Lincoln Land Community College in Springfield, Illinois for 26 years. As Regional Director of the Southern Region campus, there were a myriad of responsibilities such as recruiting and reviewing faculty, managing enrollment staff, bookstore staff, philanthropy efforts, scheduling auditorium events, college counselor, community liaison, and off-campus services. I was appointed by the Mayor to the Economic Development Board for the City of Litchfield and served for 18 years. I served as an officer-secretary for the State of Illinois Community College Economic Development Council. I spent many years serving on the St. Francis Hospital Foundation Board and the Rotary Board. I have three adult children: Melissa in Salt Lake City, Utah; Megan in Cincinnati, Ohio; Michael in Madison, Wisconsin.

Member at Large: Rick Atkinson



I grew up in Texas, received undergraduate and MD from Stanford University, Medical residency at the University of Utah, and neurology resident at UC San Francisco. I came to Sacramento in 1977 and I worked as a neurologist for Mercy and Sutter where I developed stroke programs.

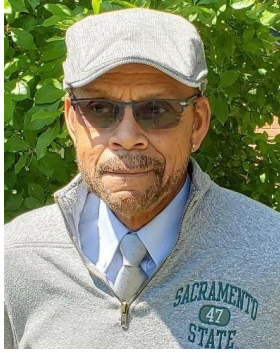
I had a side job as a medical commentator for Channel 3 KCRA and Channel 10 KXTV and produced several medical documentaries for PBS and the Discovery Channel.

I retired in 2020, and now serve as chair of Renaissance Society's Communications & Marketing Committee and serve on the Forum Committee. As a committee chair, I am also on the Renaissance Board of Directors.

I have four grown sons and four grandchildren. I enjoy reading, mountain hiking, classical guitar, and consulting with my sons about sports betting year round.

(more candidates on following page)

Member at Large: Darryl Freeman



I recently retired after thirteen years as an adjunct Professor at California State University, Sacramento.

I have a Master's degree in Government from Sacramento State University, another Master's degree in Ethnic Studies from San Francisco State University

and PhD Interdisciplinary Studies at Washington State University, Pullman.

Before my tenure at Sac State, I worked in various positions for the State of California. I was a Legislative Assistant in the State Legislature, a Consultant in the Governor's Office of Planning and Research as well as President and General Manager of a non-profit Small Business Development Corporation.

With over 35 years of community service in the Sacramento area, including volunteer service with Loaves and Fishes and coaching youth sports, I enjoy bringing a wealth of academic, social, and political experience in service to the Renaissance Society.

Member at Large: Jackie Lamb



I am is a relatively new member of the Renaissance Society and have been very impressed by the classes and other offerings. Being recently widowed I was looking for volunteer opportunities that would have purpose and to which I could offer my skills.

My career is varied starting with elementary teaching, and working at all levels of Education including Community College and Graduate classes. I also left Education and entered the Business world by joining one of the largest accounting and management consulting international firms.

At the end of my career, I returned to Education when I was appointed by Delaine Easton, the State Superintendent of Education to serve as one of the

Assistant Superintendents.

All along I have been active in leadership positions with AAUW, YWCA and other non-profit groups often leading fundraising.

After retiring I was a consultant to startup technology companies for a few years, and we moved to Del Webb in Lincon where I served on the Finance Committee and ultimately was elected to the Board of Directors. I served as President HOA for two years.

I have a Masters in Counseling and a Doctorate in Management and Leadership. I look forward to learning more about the Renaissance Society and contributing to their efforts.



Ariel String Trio Performs Concert at Classical Music Seminar

By Bob Seyfried

This was a very special day for our Classical Music Seminar attendees and the students and faculty of the Sac State School of Music.

Wendy and Mark Zlotlow of our seminar arranged with the world famous Ariel String Trio to perform a concert for us in the Capistrano recital hall.



The Trio, comprised of William Barbini, Violin and Viola, Kineko Okumura, Violin and Julie Hochman, Cello , played works by Jean Marie Leclair, Zoltan Kodaly and Ludwig van Beethoven.

Their playing was superb and it was a marvelous afternoon for all who attended.



Baseball Haiku Poetry

By Theo Goodwin

As we enter the month of April, many Americans remember baseball as a game played in their youth and as the national sport. This gives us the opportunity to examine how baseball and the Japanese form of poetry called haiku intersect. Baseball was introduced as an American sport in Hoboken, New Jersey in 1846. It soon spread throughout New York and many parts of America. In 1872 Horace Wilson, an American teacher of mathematics and English teaching at Tokyo University, introduced the sport of baseball to the people of Japan. It became known as “besuboru.”

As you may recall, haiku is a three-line form of poetry consisting of 5, 7 and 5 syllables on the three lines. It usually contains a reference to nature by means of a word associated with one of the seasons known as a *kyō*. Haiku was created in the 1600’s in medieval Japan. It was introduced to the West in the early 20th century. In America and Europe, the format became more liberal and haiku writers were allowed to drop the strict 5-7-5 format and write on virtually any topic involving nature, the individual or society.

Japanese poet Masaoka Shiki wrote the first haiku on the subject of baseball in 1890. Other poets followed Shiki’s lead. After World War II Japanese poet Saito Sanki wrote poignantly,

*After eating whalemeat
the orphans and the doctor
play baseball.*

What an insight this gives us into the lives of children whose parents were killed in Japan during the war. They are medically cared for and they find happiness in the sport of baseball. Meanwhile the tradition of killing and eating whales was preserved.

Michael Ketchek, an American poet born in 1954, became one of millions of youths who loved baseball as a local pastime and amateur sport played in virtually every school and playground or park. His poem reflects the emotion of loss in sport:

*Struck out
the long walk home
in the dusk.*

We can easily imagine him as a child striking out in disappointment and walking home on a dirt road

alone as night falls. How many athletes have experienced that emotion of failing one’s self and one’s team?

Ed Markowski, also an American born in 1954, ties his memory of baseball to inclement weather and the disappointment of missing a game,

*Rainy night
a hole in the radio
where a ballgame should be.*

Even as a spectator weather as a part of nature is an element in sport and haiku poetry.

Imai Sei, a Japanese poet born in 1950, ties the sport of baseball to the seasonal reminder of when the season begins

*It’s the time of year
for night games to begin
eggplants in flower.*

What a lovely image Sei has created by linking the flowering of a vegetable to the beginning of baseball games played at night. There must be a special feeling in the air when this moment arrives.

The options of how to juxtapose baseball and nature are countless. Try writing a baseball haiku yourself. It is exciting to learn how Japan and America view nature differently. The history of baseball and haiku poetry can be found with over 200 haiku examples in *Baseball Haiku*, edited by Cor van den Heuvel and Nanae Tamura (2007).



DINING TOGETHER

By Cheryl Nelson

Dining Together will meet at

Thai Terrace, 1596 Howe Ave, at
5:30 PM on Wednesday, April 10, 2024.



Dining Together members who wish to attend should RSVP to Cheryl Nelson: slynnsearch@yahoo.com, or, (916) 421-0407 no later than April 5, 2024. Separate checks will be provided. Parking is available.

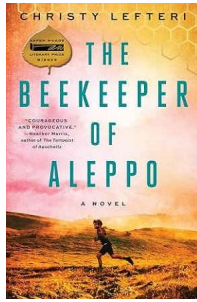


READINGS ON DIVERSITY

By Robert Benedetti and Roberta Gleeson

April is Arab American Heritage Month! During this time, we celebrate Arab Americans throughout the past and present, and recognize their invaluable contributions to our country. It also serves as a time to combat Anti-Arab bigotry and to challenge stereotypes and prejudices.

President Biden became the first U.S. president to issue a proclamation acknowledging Arab American Heritage Month.

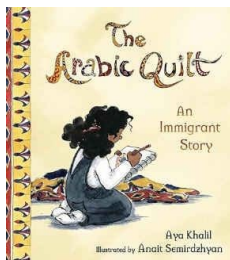


The Beekeeper of Aleppo by Christy Lefteri

Nuri is a beekeeper and Afra, his wife, is an artist. Mornings, Nuri rises early to hear the call to prayer before driving to his hives in the countryside. On weekends, Afra sells her colorful landscape paintings at the open-air market.

They live a simple life, rich in family and friends, in the hills of the beautiful Syrian city of Aleppo—until the unthinkable happens. When all they love is destroyed by war, Nuri knows they have no choice except to leave their home. But escaping Syria will be no easy task: Afra has lost her sight, leaving Nuri to navigate her grief as well as a perilous journey through Turkey and Greece toward an uncertain future in Britain.

Nuri is sustained only by the knowledge that waiting for them is his cousin Mustafa, who has started an apiary in Yorkshire and is teaching fellow refugees beekeeping. As Nuri and Afra travel through a broken world, they must confront not only the pain of their own unspeakable loss but dangers that would overwhelm even the bravest souls. Above all, they must make the difficult journey back to each other, a path once so familiar yet rendered foreign by the heartache of displacement.

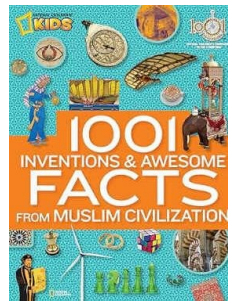


The Arabic Quilt: An Immigrant Story – Picture Book, by Aya Khalil (Author), Anait Semirdzhyan (Illustrator) Children's book

Kanzi's family has moved from Egypt to America, and on her first day in a new school, what she wants more than anything is

to fit in. Maybe that's why she forgets to take the kofta sandwich her mother has made for her lunch, but that backfires when Mama shows up at school with the sandwich. Mama wears a hijab and calls her daughter Habibt (dear one). When she leaves, the teasing starts.

That night, Kanzi wraps herself in the beautiful Arabic quilt her teita (grandma) in Cairo gave her and writes a poem in Arabic about the quilt. Next day her teacher sees the poem and gets the entire class excited about creating a "quilt" (a paper collage) of student names in Arabic. In the end, Kanzi's most treasured reminder of her old home provides a pathway for acceptance in her new one. This authentic story with beautiful illustrations includes a glossary of Arabic words and a presentation of Arabic letters with their phonetic English equivalents.



1001 Inventions and Awesome Facts from Muslim Civilization: Official Children's Companion to the 1001 Inventions Exhibition (National Geographic Kids) Children's book.

We often think that people from a thousand years ago were living in the Dark Ages. But from the 7th century onward in Muslim civilization there were amazing advances and inventions that still influence our everyday lives. People living in the Muslim world saw what the Egyptians, Chinese, Indians, Greek, and Romans had discovered and spent the next one thousand years adding new developments and ideas. Inventors created marvels like the elephant water clock, explorers drew detailed maps of the world, women made scientific breakthroughs and founded universities, architects built huge domes larger than anywhere else on earth, astronomers mapped the stars and so much more!

This book takes the winning formula of facts, photos, and fun, and applies it to this companion book to the 1001 Inventions exhibit from the Foundation for Science, Technology, and Civilization.



Give Sac State Day is April 19—20

By Mike Pidd, Chair, Resource Development Committee

Yes, it's April and that means **Give Sac State Day** is on the horizon. On April 19th we are asking our Renaissance Society members to share with students and demonstrate our gratitude for the many gifts we receive from Sac State. All of your donation dollars for this challenge go directly into our Scholarship fund!

Give Sac State Day is one of two major fund-raising initiatives we celebrate as we continue to offer seven \$3,000 scholarships to our Sac State students.

Let's exceed our goal of \$8,000 by donating online. **Stay tuned, donation instructions will be listed in the Weekly Update.** The success of the Renaissance Society is made possible by our partnership with Sac State.



April Forums

Forums are a special category of highly acclaimed and high-profile speakers addressing current topics of special interest to a wide variety of our Renaissance members. These esteemed speakers are also seasoned experts in their fields. They bring a diversity, depth, and breadth of topics to inform us about critical issues facing us and our society on an ongoing basis.

All Forums occur on Friday afternoons from 3 to 4 pm when few other Renaissance seminars, Shared Interest Groups, or presentations are offered. Speakers encourage the audience to ask probing questions about their topics.

Forum speakers for Spring 2024 will give in-person presentations in Mendocino Hall 1005. In addition, the new hybrid technology will enable these presentations to be simulcast via Zoom and viewable in real-time from home. Note: To access any of the previous Forums that are on our YouTube Channel, go to: <https://www.youtube.com/@therenaissancesociety-foru8188/featured>

April 5

Michael Sanford: The Future of Public Media in the Digital Age



Michael Sanford, Associate GM Production, joined KVIE in 2005 as Executive Producer of America's Heartland, celebrating US Agriculture.

Having spent more than 40 years in television, he oversees Inside California Education, Heartland, Viewfinder, Rob on the Road, and KVIE Arts Showcase.

His reporting has taken him to Bali, Thailand, Vietnam, Malaysia, and New Zealand, as well as Europe and the US.

Data shows that in 2023, consumers will get their news and entertainment via streaming services, thereby questioning how PBS will be able to attract the new generation of viewers.

April 19

Greg Jung "History Has Repeated Itself: History of Anti-Asian Hate in Sacramento"



Greg Jung is Executive Vice President of OCA Sacramento, which represents Asian Pacific American Advocates, a national organization dedicated to advancing the social, political, and economic well-being of Asian Pacific Islander Americans in the United States.

Having been involved in civil rights for over 20 years, he works assisting victims of anti-Asian incidents/crimes in Sacramento.

He also serves as Executive Vice Chair of Folsom History.

His presentation will focus on anti-Asian hate in the Sacramento area, including bystander intervention.

April 26

Jason Jacobs, Executive Director of the Sacramento Zoo: Creating the Next Great Zoo



Jason Jacobs embarked on his journey in the field of zoos as an intern at Zoo Miami and on the opening team of Disney's Animal Kingdom before graduating from Florida International University.

As Director of Development and Marketing at the Los Angeles Zoo, he contributed to the Los Angeles Film Task Force, offering insights into film productions.

He helped craft Betty White's best-selling book centered on Zoos.

Jacobs will cover how he worked with community and team members to develop a new zoo in Elk Grove, four times the size of the current facility.



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Save Dates for Senior Information Fairs and Spring Party!

By Debbie Martinez

Local community senior centers will host senior resource fairs in April and May and Renaissance will be there to attract new members! These free events bring together vendors and service providers who serve older adults. You can pick up literature, free samples, snacks and talk to subject matter experts.

Visit us at the following events to have fun and introduce a friend to Renaissance:

- April 24, 1pm—3pm at Neil Orchard Senior Activities Center, 3480 Routier Rd. in Sacramento
- April 25, 10am—1pm, Senior PRIDE Fair at Hart Senior Center, 915 27th St., Sacramento
- May 23, 9am—1pm at Gibbons Community Center, 4701 Gibbons Dr, Carmichael

For more information, or to tell us about another fair we can attend, contact Debbie Martinez, Debralyn78@pacbell.net.

Be sure to save the date for our **Spring Social** event on **Sunday, May 19 from 1 pm to 4 pm**. Contact Debbie to help her plan a party to celebrate the end of another great Renaissance semester.

