RENAISSANCE SOCIETY
SACRAMENTO STATE

THE RENAISSANCE RECORDER

California State University, Sacramento

Lifelong Learning Since 1986

President's Message

Deanna Hanson
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The Renaissance Society of Sacramento
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Renaissance Website:
https://csus.edu/rensoc

Key Dates

March 4th & 5th
Give Sac State Day

March 6th
First Friday Pizza: 4:15-6 pm, Round Table in Sac State University Union, (all members welcome)

Friday, March 13th
New Member Dinner: 3-7pm, Lefty's Tap Room, 5610 Elvas Avenue, 95819 (all members welcome)

Tuesday, March 17th
RS Social, St. Patrick's Day celebration: 4-8pm, O'Mally's, 1109 2nd St, Old Sac., 95814 (all members welcome).

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE – MARCH 2026

Welcome, Spring!

I'm writing this on February 10th and blossoms – white and pink - are already on many trees in Midtown and East Sacramento. I'm sure you see them bursting in your neighborhoods as well!

Classes are in full swing. Thanks to those of you who brought donations for the Basic Needs Center to our first Forum. Did you get lost finding new classrooms? It's been fun meeting new members and enjoying old friends. Of course, there were issues such as classes being full and not always getting to sit next to our friends.

We have space issues because there are more students on campus and many more classes being scheduled for Fridays. We have many people within RS as well as at Sac State working to solve this problem. We won't have all the solutions this semester but hopefully we will have more options before next fall.

What would you think if we offered in-person classes on Saturdays? What about off campus locations? Let me know! We are looking for suggestions so that we can offer even more in-person classes for our growing membership.

Speaking of growing membership, we have more new members who are younger – in their 50's and 60's. This is great news for the future of Renaissance. Although most of our members are retired from regular jobs with time to explore new ideas, topics, and experiences, **there is and there never has been an age requirement.** This is especially important as we look to recruit younger members who are interested in being involved as program leaders, in volunteering and, most importantly, in assuming leadership roles. This is a volunteer run and led organization and to survive, we depend on our members to bring new ideas and to be involved.

I recently had a conversation with a younger member who has been very actively involved. This member is not intending to remain a part of Renaissance because of encountering age discrimination. Several comments were made related to why someone so young is a member and that perhaps they didn't belong! Even if these comments were made lightly without intent to discriminate, they were received this way. We need to be aware of how remarks are perceived. We may have lost a very valuable member who could bring talents we need. Please think about this!

Deanna Hanson

Tech Wave, Tech Tribe + Digital Art. Check in with Melissa Green

By Judy Lewis

A native Californian and graduate of Cal Poly in San Luis Obispo, Melissa Green moved to Sacramento with a goal of landing a State job. When that didn't appear, she earned a Masters Degree at National University and fell back on her love of graphic arts.

Melissa rode the wave of personal computers and became a multimedia developer, sharing her knowledge with staff and faculty at American River College, Cosumnes River College and Sacramento City College.

After retiring in 2012, as the iPad was gaining popularity, Melissa joined the Renaissance Society. Since she loves Apple technology, she wondered if she would find other Renaissance members who shared her interest. "I found my tribe," she enthuses. She is delighted to work with others as part of a team, with members sharing their skills and interests.

For seven years, Melissa was involved with the iPhone Studio SIG. Her Thursday off-campus digital photography class brought her a new group of friends who taught her that every walk is a photo walk. Melissa's love of gardening (she describes her flowers as 'uncontrolled and chaotic') provides her with numerous subjects for her photography and art.

She and fellow Renaissance member Cynthia Nicholson organized an art class for iPads launching this spring. She describes Procreates as a complex program which involves photography, sketching, watercolor (digital, not 'wet') charcoal, or calligraphy, where peer-to-peer learning, discovery and support are the teachers.

Melissa admits to drowning in the Artificial Intelligence tsunami. For the past two years, she moderated a monthly Zoom discussion on the fast-flowing subject. "Throw me a life preserver! A real one, please," she says.

Sharing her tech skills, Melissa continues to serve as Zoom tech host for Wayne Luney's *The Economist* discussion class. "It's good to get a world view and not just a California view," she believes.

Nowruz: The Persian New Year

By Mahnaz Khaziri

Nowruz, which means "New Day" is the Iranian New Year. It is celebrated at the exact moment of the Spring Equinox and is one of the oldest celebrations, stretching back at least 3,000 years and rooted in Persian culture.

Nowruz has been continuously celebrated by more than 300 million people across Iran, West Asia, Central Asia, the Caucasus, Black Sea Basin, the Balkans, the South Asia and Diaspora worldwide.

Nowruz will arrive this year on **Friday, March 20 at 7:46 AM**. It is a 13-day festival of renewal which is celebrated with deep cleaning (khane tekani), new clothes, and visiting family. Key traditions include setting a Haft-sin table with seven symbolic, s-lettered items, jumping over bonfires for purification, and enjoying traditional music and food, and, on the final day, outdoor picnics.

Key traditions and customs include

- **Haft-sin Table (Sofreh-ye Haft Sin):** Families set a special table featuring seven symbolic items starting with 'S' in Persian: *Sabzeh* (wheatgrass/lentils for rebirth), *Samanu* (sweet pudding for prosperity), *Senjed* (dried oleaster for love), *Seeb* (apple for health), *Seer* (garlic for medicine), *Somaq* (sumac for sunrise), and *Serkeh* (vinegar for age/patience).

- **Symbolic Items:** Beyond the Seven 'S's, the table often includes mirrors (reflection), decorated eggs (fertility), candles (light), and a goldfish (life).

- **Spring Cleaning (Khane Tekani):** Before the new year, houses are thoroughly cleaned to shake off the dust of the past year.

- **Fire Jumping (Chaharshanbe Suri):** Celebrated on the last Wednesday before Nowruz, people jump over small bonfires to purge themselves of illness and bad luck, inviting warmth and energy.

- **Sizdah Bedar (13th Day):** The 13th day of the New Year is spent picnicking outdoors to avoid bad luck, ending with throwing the *sabzeh* (sprouts) into running water.

- **Food and Visiting:** Families wear new clothes, visit relatives, exchange gifts, and enjoy traditional, symbolic foods like *sabzi polo mahi* (herb rice with fish).

Help Wanted -- RS needs writers!

As the RS Recorder changes to allowing more pages, people with writing expertise would be an asset. The article can be on a topic of your choice within the theme of the RS Recorder.

Contact **Rick Atkinson**, Chair of Communications and Marketing, at

rpamd@yahoo.com

for more information or to express interest in working on The Recorder.

Upcoming Forum Speakers

February 27: **Marcia Eymann, Historian and Museum Consultant**

Marcia A. Eymann is an independent Museum Consultant and the Historian Emeritus for the City and County of Sacramento. She is the former Manager of the Center for Sacramento History and worked at the National Museum of American Art at the Smithsonian. She will discuss a period in California history when women enjoyed exceptional opportunities compared to women elsewhere in the US during the Gold Rush era. Female "49ers" in northern California enjoyed unique marketability in every occupation from prostitute to restaurateur, wife to hotel operator. They had unparalleled business opportunities, and access to credit and capital to a degree unusual for women in other parts of the country.

March 6: **Jim Cooper, Sacramento County Sheriff**

Sheriff Cooper is a graduate of the West Point Leadership Academy and the FBI National Academy. He earned a master's degree in organizational leadership from Saint Mary's College. After spending over 30 years in law enforcement, Sheriff Cooper was elected to become Sacramento County's 37th Sheriff in 2022. Before being elected Sheriff, he served as the City of Elk Grove's first mayor. In November 2014, Sheriff Cooper was elected to the California State Assembly, District 9, which includes the cities of Elk Grove, Sacramento, Galt and Lodi. Sheriff Cooper will discuss the mission and accomplishments of the Sheriff's Department as well as the staffing and enforcement challenges of homelessness, mental illness and substance abuse.

March 13: **Katie Correusco, Fraud & Scams - CA Dept. of Financial Protection & Innovation**

Katie Carruesco is the Northern California Targeted Outreach Specialist for the Department of Financial Protection & Innovation (DFPI). The DFPI protects California consumers by licensing and regulating a multitude of financial products, services, and individuals. Before starting her career in finance, Katie held various positions within State government, including four gubernatorial appointments. Katie will share information about how you can protect yourself from investment fraud, common scams, and unscrupulous sales practices.

March 20: **Jack Ohman, Award-winning Cartoonist**

Jack Ohman is an American editorial cartoonist and educator. He is currently a contributing opinion columnist and cartoonist for the San Francisco Chronicle. He formerly worked for The Sacramento Bee and The Oregonian. His work is syndicated nationwide to over 300 newspapers by Tribune Media Services. In 2016, he was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Editorial Cartooning.

March 27: **Sacramento City Council Member Lisa Kaplan**

Lisa Kaplan has served District 1 on the Sacramento City Council since 2022 and has been a champion for the voices of her constituents on the issues that matter most to them; from public safety and opportunities for economic development to efficiency in our public services and improving our community's infrastructure & family amenities. Prior to being elected to the City Council, Lisa served as a Natomas School Board member for twenty years, advocating for our local youth, families and schools. Ms. Kaplan will speak about what she and the City of Sacramento are looking forward to accomplishing.

I'm Irish Also

by Darryl Freeman

A couple of years ago I signed up for 23 and Me, one of several ancestry search programs available online. The DNA research results indicated that I had 66.6% West African heritage, primarily Nigerian. This was not especially surprising for a person identifying as African American. However, the research result that was somewhat surprising is that 33.3% of my DNA heritage was Northwestern European, primarily Irish and British. The historical rationale how that mix came about is story for another day. That being said, since March is officially Irish American Heritage Month, I thought it would be perfectly appropriate for me to investigate and share some information on Irish American history in this country.

Irish American Heritage Month is officially recognized in the United States each March to honor the achievements and contributions of Irish immigrants and their descendants. In 1991 the United State Congress passed a joint resolution, which was signed into law by President George H.W. Bush, recognizing March as Irish American Heritage Month. Since then, every U.S. president has issued an annual proclamation recognizing March as Irish American Heritage Month.

March was chosen because it includes St. Patrick's Day (March 17), a longstanding celebration of Irish heritage in America dating back to colonial times. Irish immigration to the U.S. began in significant numbers in the 18th century and surged during the Great Famine (1845–1852). St. Patrick's Day honors Saint Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland. In Ireland, it began as a religious feast day in the Catholic Church commemorating his death in the 5th century.

Surprisingly, St. Patrick's Day became a major celebration earlier in America than in Ireland. Historical records identify a St. Patrick's Day celebration in 1601 in what is now the city of St. Augustine, organized by an Irish vicar in the Spanish colony. The first documented organized celebration in the American colonies took place in Boston, home to a growing Irish population in 1737. In 1762 in New York City, Irish soldiers serving in the British Army marched in what became the foundation of today's parade tradition. Today, the New York City St. Patrick's Day Parade is the largest and one of the oldest civilian parades in the world. (Boston and Chicago come in second place in terms of participation size).

The holiday grew dramatically during the Great Irish Famine (1845–1852), when over a million Irish immigrants came to the United States. At the time, Irish Catholic immigrants faced several social political obstacles in assimilating in American culture. There was significant anti-Catholic prejudice stemming from historical colonial religious competition.

The main early-American Catholic colony was Maryland founded in 1632 as a refuge from the persecution in England .In New York, Massachusetts and Virginia Catholics were in a very small minority and often faced legal restrictions.

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In some cases, they could not vote, hold office, or publicly practice their faith.

During the early immigration migration there was significant "No Irish Need Apply" employment discrimination, and as an ethnic group the Irish population had marginal political influence. St. Patrick's Day Parades became both religious observances and political demonstrations of Irish American pride, solidarity and political influence.

Here are some notable Irish American political figures who have played major roles in U.S. history:

Presidents:

- Andrew Jackson -The first U.S. president of Irish descent (parents born in Ireland).James K. Polk -Had Scots Irish (Ulster Irish) ancestry.
- John F. Kennedy - The first Catholic president; his 1963 visit to Ireland was a landmark moment in Irish American identity.
- Ronald Reagan - Irish ancestry through his father; visited Ireland as President
- Joe Biden - Frequently highlights his Irish heritage and visited Ireland as President

Political Leaders:

- Tip O'Neill - Longtime Speaker of the House - one of the most influential Irish American politicians of the 20th century.
- Daniel Patrick Moynihan - Four-term U.S. Senator, scholar, and diplomat.
- Edward Kennedy – U.S Senator and key legislative figure; youngest brother of JFK.
- Richard J. Daley - Dominant political figure in Chicago for two decades.
- William M. Tweed - Leader of Tammany Hall in the 19th century (Irish Protestant)
- Brett Kavanaugh - Associate Justice appointed in 2018 has Irish Catholic heritage.

Today, St. Patrick's Day is one of the largest ethnic celebrations in the United States, observed by over 30 million Americans who claim Irish ancestry and many who are not Irish. It represents how immigrant communities shaped American civic traditions, turning a religious feast day into one of the country's most visible social political public celebrations

It is with great sadness that I inform fellow Renaissance Society members of the passing of Paul Micheli (1934-2026) in Sacramento. Paul taught an extremely popular courses on ancient civilizations, especially the Etruscans and the Sumerians.

A retired rocket scientist, Paul immersed himself in researching and leading seminars on campus prior to the COVID pandemic. Besides leading Renaissance Society seminars, Paul was an avid world traveler with his wife, Vima. He had been in poor health for several years.

Submitted by Cathy Minicucci

Dining Together - March 2026

by Susie Fogg

Dining Together will meet at **YD Tofu House - Korean BBQ** located at 8991 Folsom Blvd, Sacramento at 5:30 p.m. on Wednesday, March 11th.

Please **RSVP** by March 8th to Susie at **susiemfogg@gmail.com.**
Cash only, ample parking, max 25 people.

MARCH 4–5 IS OUR MOMENT
GIVE. SUPPORT. TRANSFORM LIVES

Give Sac State Day on March 4th and 5th is our chance to make a collective impact that no single gift could achieve alone. Our goal is simple: when every member participates with a gift of $5 or more, we can strengthen our fifth endowment and expand scholarships that directly change students' lives. Participation is what matters most, because it shows the strength and unity of our Society. When we all take part, we demonstrate that this mission truly matters. **CLICK HERE** to learn about the reason we are doing this. Please join us in making your gift and helping turn shared commitment into lasting opportunity by **clicking HERE.** Or, scan the QR CODE below.

EVERY MEMBER. EVERY GIFT. EVERY IMPACT.

GIVE SAC STATE DAY — MARCH 4–5

JUST $5 MAKES A DIFFERENCE JOIN US FOR GIVE SAC STATE

In the months ahead, The Recorder will revisit the lives of Renaissance Society members who are no longer with us. By sharing their stories, we reconnect with the spirit, curiosity, and generosity that shaped our early years — and remind ourselves that our history lives on in the people who built it.

Victor and Pearl Selinsky

by Maryellen Burns

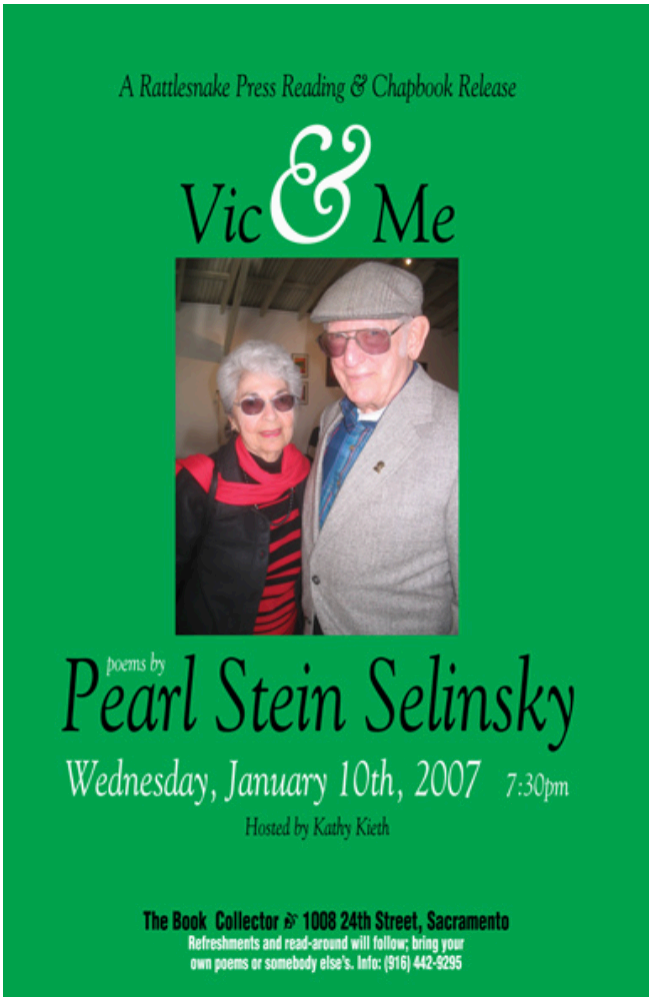
When Victor and Pearl Stein Selinsky left Silver Lake in Los Angeles in the mid-1980s, they were not simply relocating. They were searching.

Silver Lake had fed them well. It was an artistic enclave, layered with musicians, painters, poets, and late-night arguments about aesthetics and politics. Victor had long since established himself as a serious painter, a man whose early artistic instincts were forged under extraordinary conditions. During World War II, he sketched constantly, using whatever materials he could find — charred twigs, broken rulers, makeshift ink — documenting what he saw not as spectacle but as human experience. That habit of looking closely never left him.

He grew up in a musical family; his father played in the symphony. Art and discipline were part of the air he breathed. But so were politics and consequence. His brother, unable to accept California's loyalty oath during the Red Scare, lost his job and later took his own life. The cost of conviction was not theoretical in the Selinsky household.

By the time Victor and Pearl came north to Sacramento, they were looking for something quieter but no less alive. A place that would feed both their intellect and their need for community. They found it in the early years of the Renaissance Society of Sacramento.

In those formative years, the Renaissance Society was not yet the large, structured organization it would become. It was a gathering of curious minds — retired professors, artists, readers, wanderers — people who still believed that learning did not end with a diploma. Victor and Pearl fit perfectly.



Victor brought with him not only his paintings but his way of seeing. He taught a four-session course on Impressionism that many of us still remember. He did not treat it as a survey or a lecture series. He treated it as a revelation. He opened our eyes to light. To how color breathes against color, how form dissolves and reforms in atmosphere. Some of us had glanced at Impressionism before; after Victor, we believed in it. Wayne Thiebaud once remarked that Victor was better at figure painting than the rest of the locals — praise that circulated quietly but carried weight. Those of us who saw him work did not doubt it.

Pearl was equally transformative, though in a different register. She earned her master's degree in Creative Writing at Sacramento State later in life, proof that intellectual hunger does not dim with age. Her poetry confronted what society prefers not to see — women crossing into invisibility, aging bodies, interior lives that continue long after the world stops looking. She wrote with clarity and steel. Her books and readings gave language to experiences many felt but had not named. (Continued on page 9)

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Together, they helped shape the tone of the Renaissance Society in its early years. They opened their home to fellow members — evenings of art, poetry, travel stories, and wide-ranging debate. Phoebe German, Bob Good, Peg McKoane, Marty Rodgers, Angus Wright, my husband Leo, and I were among those welcomed into that warm, questioning space. There was always conversation. There was always curiosity.

They believed in staying awake to the world, traveling widely, disagreeing thoughtfully, discarding old assumptions when necessary. Renaissance was not just the name of the organization for them; it was a way of being.

In coming to Sacramento, Victor and Pearl did not retire from life. They reinvested in it. And in doing so, they helped define what the Renaissance Society would become: a community where art matters, ideas matter and growing older means growing deeper.