

## President's Corner



**Deborah Seiler**

President

The Renaissance Society  
of Sacramento

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

### Key Dates

April 30  
Arden Park Social

May 5  
Voting ends  
Results announced

May 12  
Annual Meeting

May 19  
Program Leaders Workshop

June 1  
2023-2024 registration begins



May marks the end of the spring semester, and what a successful semester it has been. We ended the 2022-2023 year with 1,716 members, of whom 273 joined in the spring, 60 are honorary members over the age of 90 and 11 are Forum speakers who received a complimentary membership for their presentations.

The spring semester featured 41 seminars, 60 single presentations, 28 SIGs (Special Interest Groups) and 12 Forums. 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 classes.

We look forward with excitement to another **free summer program** on eight Fridays in June and July in Del Norte Hall Room 1004. This year's theme is "**Celebrating Diversity**," and our first speaker on June 9 at 10 am will be artist, musician, author and illustrator Al Striplen of Ohlone and Aztec heritage. Again, our morning presentations will be followed by brown bag lunches and campus tours including two of the Planetarium which was most popular last summer. This free summer program is a great chance for you to invite a friend to enjoy our programming, the wonderful campus, and the social opportunities we have planned.

Many of our social events will provide an opportunity to thank our many donors who contribute to the scholarship and special projects funds, the ASI Food Pantry, and to our general fund through the **Give Something Extra** program which occurs during the registration/renewal process. These donations make a true difference in the lives of Sac State students and help us avoid raising membership dues. Keep up the good work, members!

Don't forget to attend our **Annual Meeting** on Friday, May 12 at 3 pm which will feature remarks by retiring President Robert S. Nelsen, two-minute videos of our seven student scholarship recipients, and the presentation of the 2023 **Warren Bonta Diversity and Inclusion Award** to Erik Ramirez, Director of Equity and Affinity Centers in the Division of Student Affairs at Sac State. It will also include remarks by the President, the announcement of our second endowed scholarship, and the announcement of election results for the 2023-2024 Board of Directors.

On June 1 we once again celebrate the beginning of registration for the 2023-2024 year. We had hoped for a continuous registration period spanning spring and fall semesters similar to the continuous period spanning fall to spring semesters. However, the tech folks at Sac State need to end registration in May so they can create a new database. The "down period" is necessary for their work but it will be brief.

Welcome to end of semester events and to a summer of fun!

Deborah



## River City Rowing Club ROWist Cancer Survivors: Learn to Row

Former Renaissance Society Office Manager and current member Shari Lowen was diagnosed with lung cancer and underwent successful surgery in 2021. As an avid long-time rower with the River City Rowing Club, Shari has replicated a ROWist program to help cancer survivors rebuild strength and mental focus through the sport of rowing. Enjoy teamwork and the beauty of rowing on the water. No experience is required, and all ages are welcome!

Four-week classes offered May-October.

Two practices per week: Thursdays 6:00-8:00pm and Sundays 12:00-2:00pm

RiverCity Rowing Club

Port of West Sacramento

[www.rivercityrowing.org](http://www.rivercityrowing.org)

Program Coordinator, Shari Lowen, (916) 956-4068, [rowsist@rivercityrowing.org](mailto:rowsist@rivercityrowing.org)



**RCRC ROWsist**

**Cancer Survivors : Learn to Row**

Re-build strength and mental focus through the sport of rowing.  
Enjoy teamwork and the beauty of rowing on the water.  
No experience is required and all ages are welcome!

Four-week classes offered May-October. Two practices/week - Thursday: 6:00-8:00pm and Sunday: 12:00-2:00pm	River City Rowing Club Port of West Sacramento <a href="http://www.rivercityrowing.org">www.rivercityrowing.org</a>	
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**Program Coordinator - Shari Lowen - (916) 956-4068 - [rowsist@rivercityrowing.org](mailto:rowsist@rivercityrowing.org)**

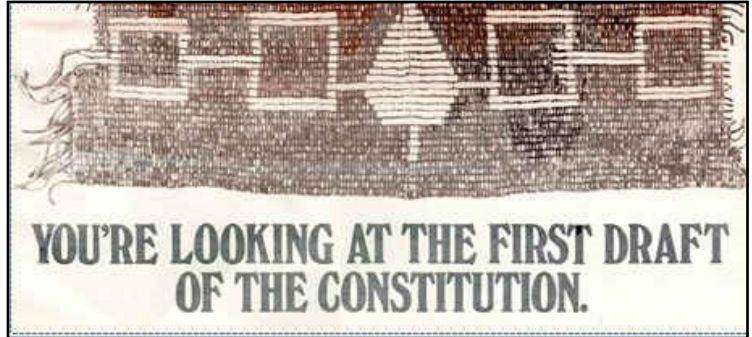
# Reflections of Ethnic America

By Darryl O. Freeman

Here are some contributions of minority ethnic Americans that have often not been recognized in the annals of American History textbooks:

## Native Americans Help Shape the Constitution

One of the Founding Fathers of the United States, Benjamin Franklin, invited members of the Iroquois Chief Council to address the Continental Congress in 1776 to explain their “Great Laws of Peace.” Many of the concepts of Iroquois laws that were written on beaded Wampum belts were incorporated in the U.S. Constitution. In 1987, the United States Senate passed a resolution which acknowledged the contribution of the Iroquois Confederacy of Nations to the development of the United States Constitution.



Topeka, Kansas. Two Mexican workers employed at the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad locomotive shops

## Mexican Heritage Workers Helped Build the Railroad

Recent research has uncovered the significant contributions of Mexicans and Mexican Americans in much of the rail building work in the midwestern and southwestern part of the country. The *Traqueros*, the Mexican/Chicanx railroad workers, were the equivalent of the *bracero* farmworkers. They played an invaluable role in the building of western railroads. Marginalized in American history narrative, Mexican/Chicanx workers were the majority of the tracklaying workers in the western rail build during the early 1900s. They were accustomed to working in the hot dry climate of the west, unlike their Chinese and Italian counterparts in the north and east. In spite of the racism of rail company employees, low wages, and discrimination by local town folk, the Mexican/Chicano rail workers persevered.



## Patsy Mink – First Japanese American Woman in Congress

Third generation Japanese American, Patsy Mink, was the first Asian American woman elected to the United States Congress. Her rise to power was difficult. Although she had a degree in law she was unable to find work because of her status as a married Asian American woman. Before she was elected to Congress Patsy Mink was elected to represent her district in Hawaii’s territorial House of Representatives. Two years later she was elected to the territorial Senate. In 1964, Patsy Mink was elected to represent Hawaii’s Second Congressional District—one of eight women in Congress serving during that time. Her most notable achievement is Title IX legislation that prohibits gender discrimination in education.



## The Founder of Chicago Was of African Ancestry



Jean-Baptiste Pointe Du Sablesta.

Most Americans do not realize that the first non-indigenous resident of the area now known as Chicago was of African ancestry. Jean Pointe Baptiste Du Sable was born free in 1750 in Haiti to an expatriate French father married to an African ancestry woman. He migrated to the Great Lakes designated Indian territory in 1770. Du Sable established himself as a prolific and fair trader with the French colonists of Canada and the Native traders in the territory. For three years, he managed the British trading post called the Pinery near Fort Mackinac, Michigan. During that time he

distinguished himself as a peacemaker and trusted liaison between the Native people and the invading Europeans. He and Kittihawa, his Potawatomi wife, eventually settled and established a trading post along Lake Michigan in the area now known as Chicago. By 1790, Du Sable's outpost had developed into a thriving settlement linking the fur trade and grain farming with trade routes by lake and land to the east and Europe. His twenty-year stint with the Chicago settlement earns him the Illinois historical designation as the founder of Chicago.

## Paper Bag Inventor - Margaret E. Knight



If you have ever used a paper bag, you can thank Margaret "Mattie" Knight, the 19th century's most famous woman inventor. Born in York, Maine (1838-1914) Knight was most well known for a machine she built when she was 30 years old. This invention folded and glued paper to create a flat-bottomed paper bag. The product was popular — so popular, in fact, that a man stole the idea to patent himself. When Knight took him to court for patent interference, he argued that a woman "could not possibly understand the mechanical complexities."



Knight won her case by providing proof that she had designed the machine, earning herself the right to the patent. Over the course of her career, Knight invented over 100 different machines and patented 20 of them, including a rotary engine, a shoe-cutting machine, and a window frame with a sash. But if the true test of an invention is its staying power, then Knight's paper bag still used today is proof of her incredible talent.



This represents only a glimpse of the contributions of different ethnic minorities to the growth of our evolving American society. There will be more observations in future articles.



## FORUMS

**May 5**

**Capital Hooverilles:  
Sacramento's Depression Era Communities**  
[In-person and Zoom, Recorded]



A native of Portland, Oregon, historian James Scott has worked with the Sacramento Public Library since 2000, most of that time as an archivist in the agency's special collections and archives. He is a graduate of Marquette University and has master's degrees in Information Science and German History.

Scott is also the co-author of several books on Sacramento. Join Scott for a deep dive into the Capital City's Depression-era Hooverilles. From Gardenland to Rotten Egg, we'll explore the makeshift existence of the hundreds of souls who, escaping the throes of the Great Depression or the scourge of the Dust Bowl, decided to make a stand in Sacramento. Rare photographs, archival content, and handouts will accent this presentation.

**May 12**

**Renaissance Society Annual Meeting**  
[In-person and Zoom, Recorded]



This forum represents the Renaissance Society's Annual Meeting, hosted by current Renaissance Society President Deborah Seiler.

Previously, Deborah served as Assistant to CA Secretary of State March Fong Eu for Elections and Political Reform and many other positions related to elections and legislative committees. This meeting will feature a welcome from President Robert S. Nelsen, and our Scholarship Committee Chair, Laurye Brownfield will also introduce our seven scholarship recipients and present their appreciation videos. In addition, Membership, Diversity, and Community Engagement Committee Chair, Debbie Martinez will present the Diversity & Equity Award. Light refreshments and the opportunity to congratulate individual awardees will follow the event.



## RENAISSANCE HOW TO

**How to become a Program Leader?  
And where to start?**

**The Program Committee offers help:**

- 25 Great Course DVDs and texts can launch a One-Time Presentation or an entire 3- to 12-week Seminar. Contact the office for the list: 916-758-5133 or [renaissa@csus.edu](mailto:renaissa@csus.edu)
- Have an activity you love? Become a Shared Interest Group (SIG) facilitator
- Want to discuss your ideas? Reach out to Pam O'Brien or Kathryn Tobias
- Need a mentor? That can be arranged
- Attend the May 19 Program Leader Workshop. It's a hybrid event
- Read the online Program Leader Workbook: [www.csus.edu/org/rensoc](http://www.csus.edu/org/rensoc) in the 'Resources' section. All the nuts and bolts!
- Still seems daunting? Look for a co-leader. Collaboration works!
- Seminar leaders must be RS members. Presenters may be guest speakers
- Applications for Fall programs accepted April 3 – May 1

**How to submit photos for the Catalog?**

- Send yours that make you happy or proud! [lorene.sarne@csus.edu](mailto:lorene.sarne@csus.edu)
- No need to follow a theme
- Use a jpeg format
- Fall Catalog photos submissions accepted April 5 – May 3.

**How to become more involved as a volunteer?  
The Program Committee offers opportunities!**

- Plan the Open House event in January and/or August
- Prepare Recruitment slides twice a year
- Organize the Program Leader Workshops in January and May
- Staff the Help Desk held the first two Fridays of every semester
- Mentor a new program leader
- Initiate a Program Leader Feedback support system
- Become a Tech Host



## MEMBER PROFILES

### Global Warming is a Concern for Bonnie Gault-Blue

By Judy A. Lewis

After spending her younger years in chilly Chicago and Wisconsin, Bonnie Gault-Blue headed to Scotland. There she spent five years with the Findhorn Foundation, which she describes as a spiritual community. Bonnie reports that individuals from all over the globe attended the “transformative” workshops, some of which she facilitated.



Following five years in Scotland, she joined her family in California. Bonnie had earned a B.A. in psychology from the University of Wisconsin, Madison. Next she completed a master’s degree in counseling through the California Institute of Integral Studies in San Francisco. This was followed by an internship in Roseville and then Bonnie opened her own private counseling practice for 20 years in Sacramento.

Bonnie reports that she has always been a gardener from her time on a Wisconsin farm to her years in Scotland. Al Gore’s *An Inconvenient Truth* documentary started her on a journey to do what she could about global warming, including gardening. Her focus now has been growing vegetables and native plants which can survive climate change. Along the way, Bonnie published a memoir featuring her time in Scotland.

When Renaissance Society member Nanci Kuzins encouraged Bonnie to join the group, she soon did. She found retirement as an opportunity to expand and explore new interests. It also led to Bonnie providing a Zoom class on “Vegetable Gardening in Sacramento.” She relishes the feedback that her students provide.

Along with a group of friends, Bonnie gets together in what they call “The Death Café.” They discuss options for dying, as well as exploring ‘near death’ experiences, where individuals describe “transitioning to the other side and coming back.” In keeping with her focus on slowing down global warming, Bonnie prefers riding her bicycle to driving. She and her husband are looking at the possibility of purchasing an electric car. And her next project? She’s hopeful that she can create a wildlife corridor in her neighborhood which would attract butterflies and other helpful insects.



### Volunteer Highlights: Richard Fuller

By Deborah Seiler

When Renaissance member Terry Moss introduced Richard Fuller to Renaissance in early 2008, it was love at first sight. Richard instantly bonded with Renaissance and began a journey that led him to produce and present over 20 seminars, both morning and afternoon on Fridays. After the first seminar he attended left him cold when the presenter announced “welcome, and now I’ll turn on the video.” Richard knew he could do better. His early seminar about emigrants coming over the plains and the Sierras began with 25 members and quickly grew, word of mouth, to 50.

Member Allan Keown recalls Richard’s morning presentations caused a stir when members came into the library, dropped their coats to reserve their seats and go for coffee. Late-comers were denied a seat and demand for the class was so high that program leaders had to insist on an absolute first-come-first served policy. No more reserving seats for Richard’s classes.

Richard always tried to keep his material very fresh and inventive, just like his entire life. His very favorite presentation was the “Making of the Bible” and his second was “Native Americana” which led him to travel 9,547 miles to do research.

His travel to 69 countries and 49 states leaves him with many stories to tell. And now he will have more time to tell them. On May 12, Richard will step away from the long commute with Terry from Lincoln to Sac State and devote more time to local volunteer efforts in Lincoln and Roseville.

We all owe a debt of gratitude to Terry who introduced Richard to Renaissance and who, at almost 91, plans to remain as a facilitator for another year. And certainly we deeply appreciate Richard for his commitment and lively presentations. He will be missed.

By the way, Richard’s next big trip is to India in May, 2024. Want to join him?



## LITERARY READINGS ON DIVERSITY

By Robert Benedetti and Roberta Gleeson

*In our on-going commitment to President Nelsen's campus-wide plan to end discrimination and prejudice, we present our latest:*

**The Racial Railroad**, Julia H. Lee, (New York University Press, 2022), and **Interracial Encounters: Reciprocal Representations in African and Asian American Literatures, 1896-1937** (New York University Press, 2022). These are good books by a talented academic.

**Chinese in Napa Valley**, John McCormick, (Arcadia Press, 2023)

**Miguel's Community Garden (Where In the Garden?)**, JaNay Brown-Wood, Hardcover \$15.89; Paperback \$8.99  
Some say JaNay Brown-Wood came right out the womb filled with stories. She grew up in Fresno, then to UCLA where she graduated with her BA in Psychology. At CSU Sacramento she earned a MA in Child Development, and at UC Davis she completed a PhD in Education. JaNay has been a performer, preschool teacher, camp counselor, poet, silly-song singer, youth specialist, designer of curriculum, Harry Potter lover, college professor, reader, and jellybean eater. Currently, she teaches at Cal State University, Sacramento



### DINING TOGETHER

By Cheryl Nelson

Dining Together will meet on

**Wednesday, May 10 at  
Ettore's Bakery & Restaurant,  
2376 Fair Oaks Blvd. at 5:30 PM  
([www.ettore.com](http://www.ettore.com)).**

Please **RSVP** to Cheryl Nelson:  
[slynnsearch@yahoo.com](mailto:slynnsearch@yahoo.com), or,  
(916) 421-0407  
no later than May 4, 2023.

Parking is available.



## It's Party Time Again...and We Have Lots to Celebrate!

Social leader, Allan Keown, and MDCE Committee Chair Debbie Martinez have another wonderful party planned to celebrate the end of the semester, our collective diversity and heritage, and our wonderful donors.

This semester's theme is: **"Our Multicultural World"** and it comes on the eve of May's Asian and Pacific Islander Heritage Month. We'll take lots of pictures for our June Recorder and the Annual Report. Join us for a terrific time.

**When:** Sunday, April 30, noon to 4:00 p.m.

**Where:** Arden Park, 1000 La Sierra Drive.

**Food/Desserts:** We will provide main dishes in honor of Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders as well as yummy desserts.

**Bring:** Your family's favorite appetizer or salad to share. Please list the ingredients!

**Drinks:** We will provide water and ice but please bring your own preferred beverage — NO GLASS!

**Dress:** Casual.

**Lawn Chairs:** Bring one if you don't like hard chairs or benches.

**Music:** TBD (we have some ideas but would love yours, too)

\*\*These parties need volunteers to help set up and clean up!! Please consider contacting Allan at 916-501-8833 to sign up to help. Many hands make light work! See you there!





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June Issue Submissions Due: **May 2**

Remember to Vote!!  
Voting ends Friday, May 5.  
Help us elect our 2023-2024 Board of Directors

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**NATIONAL HERITAGE/DIVERSITY MONTHS**

**MAY**

**Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) Month  
Jewish American Heritage Month**

