



THE RENAISSANCE RECORDER

California State University, Sacramento

Lifelong Learning Since 1986

President's Message



Deanna Hanson

President

The Renaissance Society
of Sacramento

deannahanson@gmail.com

Renaissance Website:

<https://csus.edu/rensoc>

Key Dates

May 1

First Friday Pizza:4pm

May 8, 3pm

Final Forum and Annual Meeting, Amador 153

May 17

Spring Picnic, Arden Park Community Center 11 - 4

•Bring your own drinks and a main dish or salad to share with 10-12 people with clearly marked ingredients; Renaissance Society will provide water, ice, cups, plates, utensils, napkins, and desserts

May 25

Memorial Day,

Campus is Closed

June 1 – 2026-2027

Membership Enrollment Opens

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE – May 2026

What I Love Most About Renaissance Society

I recently had lunch with a Renaissance member who has become a good friend. She was born in a country with quite a different culture and yet we have so much in common. It is wonderful when friendships like that happen – when we meet someone new and soon become friends.

My experience serving as President this year has brought me opportunities to create terrific new friendships. I do not believe you can ever have too many friends, right? I am so grateful for these experiences and these people in my life.

I have been a member of Renaissance for nine years and I have enjoyed the last three years the most. Before then, I loved taking classes and, yes, I met new people in those classes. But, since I have become more involved – first, as a committee chair, then a board member, Vice President and President, I have met so very many more people, and I am lucky to have formed strong new friendships. Next year, as I transition to Past President, I hope for that to continue.

The most wonderful attribute my new friends bring is diversity. Diverse backgrounds, diverse opinions, diverse experiences, and new world views. I grew up in a small town in the middle of Iowa. When I was growing up, everyone looked like me. In fact, my Italian mother was considered by those who had grown up in this small town as a foreigner, and Mom had difficulty making friends. My grandparents spoke little English. It was 1942 and people were “suspicious” of strangers.

When I moved to California in 1964, I was so excited to meet people with diverse backgrounds, different languages, different skin colors. My husband was teaching and coaching in a middle school in Del Paso Heights and I was working for Pacific Bell. We formed friendships with people of all races, religions, socio-economic backgrounds, interests, opinions – it was great! I learned so much from all those I met. We raised our children to be friends with and accept everyone. And, yet we encountered racism, lack of acceptance, and often non-negotiable opinions among those we thought were our friends. I did not understand then and I still do not. I do accept that people have varying backgrounds and opinions, and that I may not agree with all of them.

Renaissance friendships have been easy for me – even with those with diverse backgrounds, interests, and opinions. I have learned so much from all of you. Also, I am so pleased with the growing diversity and acceptance within Renaissance. Let us all keep expanding that! *Thank you all for being my friends.*

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.

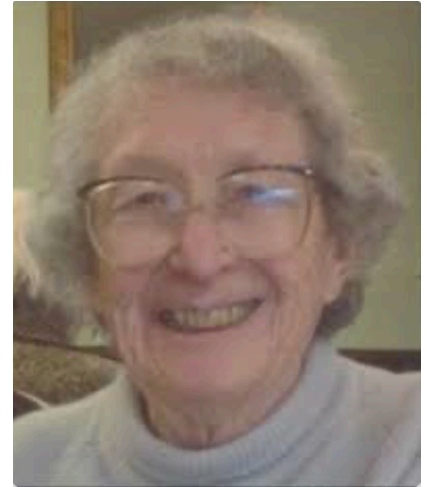
Art and Phoebe German: Keeping the Conversation Alive

By Maryellen Burns

Art and Phoebe German came to the Renaissance Society in its early years, in the 1990s, when it was still finding its footing. What they brought with them was not just experience, but a way of being. Curious, engaged, and deeply attentive to the lives and stories around them.

Art's path to Sacramento began in Brooklyn, where he was born in 1925. A gifted student, he moved quickly through school before his education was interrupted by World War II. He served as a mortar gunner in Europe, returned home, and completed his studies in journalism, eventually earning a master's degree at Stanford on the GI Bill. By then, writing was not just an interest but a vocation.

It was during those early years that he met Phoebe at Brooklyn College. Their partnership, personal and intellectual, would span more than six decades. After the war, they came west together, beginning in Woodland, where both wrote for the *Woodland Daily Democrat*. From the outset, theirs was a shared life in writing: observing, reporting, shaping the everyday into story.



That partnership continued as they moved through California. Art worked for several newspapers before settling into a long career with the California Youth Authority, where he created and edited an internal publication that colleagues remember as lively, thoughtful, and distinctly his. But even in institutional settings, writing for him was never merely informational, it carried voice, character, and a sense of audience.

Later, after his retirement, he returned to more public writing through his column in the *Sacramento Bee's* "Neighbors" section. He liked to call it "Bee-lite," and that felt about right. These were not heavy pieces, not front-page news, but small, observant essays about people and the texture of everyday life. He wrote about whatever caught his attention. Something overheard, someone interesting, a moment worth pausing over.

Phoebe, throughout all of this, was not simply a partner in life but a writer in her own right. From those early newspaper days forward, she shared in the work of shaping stories and ideas. If Art's writing often appeared under a byline, Phoebe's influence was just as present—through collaboration, conversation, and her own steady engagement with the written word.

At the Renaissance Society, that engagement took on a new form. Phoebe organized a New Yorker reading group that became a kind of informal salon, weekly gatherings where members came together not just to discuss articles, but to think aloud, to question, and to connect ideas to their own lives. It was, at heart, an extension of the same instinct that had guided her all along: that writing and reading are most alive when shared.

Together, Art and Phoebe became natural mentors. They welcomed newcomers, encouraged writers, and listened with genuine interest. You had the sense, when talking with them, that what you said mattered. That your story, however small, was worth telling.

And then there was Yiddish. Until I knew them, I thought of Yiddish simply as a language, something spoken

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(Art and Phoebe German: Keeping the Conversation Alive- Continued from Page 2)

by an earlier generation and gradually fading away. But for Art and Phoebe, it was something much more. It was a culture, a sensibility, a way of understanding humor and loss and resilience all at once.

Out of that understanding came a Yiddish conversation group that eventually grew into a kind of club. They met regularly, talked, laughed, and in doing so kept something vital alive. It wasn't formal or academic. It was lived. Stories, expressions, turns of phrase, all of it carried forward through conversation.

To be around them was to realize that culture isn't preserved in museums so much as in rooms like that. In gatherings where people show up, speak, listen, and remember.

Their interests ranged widely, from writing groups, cultural discussions, travel, Jewish history and identity, but what tied it all together was their belief in conversation itself. Not performance, not lecture, but exchange.

Art had an ease about him, a kind of quiet humor and a readiness to engage. Phoebe had a steady, organizing presence, the ability to bring people together and give shape to an idea. Between them, they created spaces where people could think out loud and feel at home doing so.

Phoebe died in 2013. Art followed in 2020.

What remains is not just what they did, but what they made possible. If the Renaissance Society has always felt like a place where people gather not just to learn but to talk, to question, to share stories and perspectives, it is because of people like Art and Phoebe German. They did more than participate. They kept the conversation alive.



SAFETY ON CAMPUS

By Deanna Hanson

Several people have recently asked for clarification regarding safety, contact information and procedures related to safety when on campus. I will try to cover your questions.

It's important to know that there is a Sac State Police Service Center just on the Right inside the East Entrance to the University Union. They have information and can answer questions. Their phone number is **916 278-6000** and website is police@csus.edu. They provide 24/7 campus patrol & dispatch operations, safety escorts, Jump Start & Vehicle Lockout Assistance, Bike Registrations, Live Scan Fingerprinting and Lost & Found.

We can access their website to report either a lost or found item lostandfound@csus.edu.

Renaissance members do not have access to sign up for the Emergency Notification System, but we are checking how we might be able to get access. In the meantime, in case of a campus critical incident, go to www.csus.edu for information.

The best tool for all information is the Sac State App which we should all have on our phones. It includes campus maps which include all buildings and parking. You can see real-time parking availability and paying for parking on days our permits are not valid. It also includes a virtual tour of the Main Campus, Downtown Campus at 304 S Street, the Sac State Aquatic Center, Library and Sac State Hidden Gems. It also includes upcoming events at the Planetarium, School of Music, Art Galleries and Hornets sporting events. You won't get lost if you use this app.

If you go to "My Menu" on the app, you will see a "Safety" icon. This allows you to contact Campus Police, report a Safety Hazard, or request a Hornet Safety Escort. The app also contains a Campus Safety Map, Building Emergency Plans, Emergency Preparedness, Sexual Violence Support and Health & Counseling Services. Everything is at your fingertips!

Environmental Issues Are Top of Mind for Matt Kuzins

By Judy Lewis

Matt spent his first six weeks of life in New York, before becoming the youngest passenger on an airplane when his family moved to Los Angeles.

In 1976, Matt enrolled at U.C. Davis where he earned a Bachelor's Degree in Renewable Natural Resources. His class of 12 students were "really into recycling," he reports. As part of a student internship, he focused on passing a bill which would require a five-cent bottle and can deposit. He eventually led the campaign and gathered signatures for Proposition 11 in 1982. Though the initiative was defeated, Governor Deukmajian signed the bill into law in 1986. "We were just a bunch of hippies," Matt laughs.

As a direct mail fundraising consultant, he formed his own company—Matt Kuzins & Kompany. Initially he was the only employee, but after three years he began hiring staff. They did fundraising via U.S. mail outreach for environmental groups such as the Sierra Club, utility ratepayer organizations, and animal protection agencies, including Humane Society ballot measures in 10 different states. The California State Railroad Museum Foundation and the Sacramento Public Library Foundation were also among his clients.

Altogether Matt figures he has been involved in fifty different ballot measures. "It was kind of an accidental career," he says. By 2010, he decided he'd had enough of politics, so he retired.

Music has also filled a big part in Matt's life. He describes his tastes as trending toward rock and pop. The band Kuzins & Kumpany has three albums that can be enjoyed on You Tube, Spotify, Amazon, Apple and other music streaming sites. Matt plays a variety of instruments, including guitar, bass, mandolin, piano, and drums, as well as singing. He performed for many years at various festivals, clubs and events. "Moving the instruments around was much easier when we were younger," he notes.

Backpacking, camping and bicycling have helped him keep in shape.

His wife, Nanci Kuzins, encouraged him to join her in the Renaissance Society.

The couple's daughter, who lives in Los Angeles, recently gifted them with a new grandson.



Enjoy **May's Dining Together** on **Wednesday, May 13 at 5:30 pm**
at [Mamma Susanna's](#), 5487 Carlson Dr.

Cash only. Ample parking. Maximum of 25 people.

RSVP by **Saturday, May 9**, to **Susie Fogg** at susiemfogg@gmail.com.



FORUM IDEAS ENCOURAGED

The Forum committee has developed another list of interesting speakers for the Fall 2026 semester. We are encouraging suggestions for topics and/or speakers for the Spring 2027 semester.

You may wonder why this is done so far in advance. There are two major reasons: Our speakers are busy people, and we need to book them very early. Also, gathering all the information for each semester's terrific catalogs requires many details and preparation several weeks in advance. And we sometimes need additional "back up" speakers "just in case".

Please email Sigrid Bathen at sigridbathen@gmail.com or Lynda Cassady at cassady.lynda@gmail.com - all suggestions are encouraged. You may also be interested in joining the Forum Committee.

THANK YOU TO OUR SUPERSTARS!

We have received many compliments on our "new look" Renaissance web page. The Renaissance Society Communications and Marketing Committee has been hard at work!

If you haven't paid attention to the latest, take a look: <https://www.csus.edu/rensoc>

This update is the work of Teri Stone who is our new webmaster. Thank you so much, Teri! It is easy to find almost anything you may want to know about Renaissance including how to get more involved.

Also, notice the bottom of the first front page where the RS Calendar resides. We now have a calendar feature which allows us to update and add calendar items. See the black box "Visit Full Calendar" which allows even more information about events you may find interesting. Amber Korb is responsible for developing this wonderful tool to keep us informed. We will attempt to add even more to the calendar to make it easier to have FUN! If you would like to add something, [click on this link](#) Scroll down on the right column and click on

Visit Full Calendar

for instructions for using the calendar.

Hollis Kulwin, Teri Stone and Loretta Burdeaux continue to provide our Weekly Update news. They would love to recruit another person or two for back-up so that they can take vacations!

We are also always looking for contributors to the Recorder. If you have ideas, would like to write about one of our program leaders or programs, interview interesting members or just contribute an idea, contact Rick Atkinson who is the wonderful leader of our terrific C&M Committee!



Michele Finerty had been a member since 2016 and served on the Renaissance Society Board as Forum Committee Chair.

In memory of several recent losses of Renaissance Society members

"Memorial Service"

By Sheldon Yee

Today We Are Gathered
To Honor Life of Our Friend,
Living To the Fullest
Until Met Untimely End.

Disbelief Of Sudden Departure
Has Caught Us by Surprise
Because We Naively Assumed
They Would Remain Before Our Eyes.

Instead, We Are Reminiscing
What Value They Meant
To Our Lives as We Knew It
By Chance Or Intent.

Impactfully Touched Us
Through Infinite Ways
Including Unknown Future
And Fondly Remembered Days.

This Day Is Dedicated
To Preserving Memories, We Hold
Give Us Strength in Grieving
When Heartache Unfolds.

God Who Watches Over All
Reaches Out in Our Pain
With Holy Words of Prayer
Impossible To Explain.

On Earth, There Is Sadness
Of Never-Ending Strife
While Jesus Brought the Only Way
We Receive Ever-Lasting Life.

SACRAMENTO BLUES SOCIETY PARTNERSHIP

The Renaissance Society, Sacramento Blues Society, and ASI's new partnership resulted in the first jointly sponsored event. This event launched a special Spring concert: "Blues on the Green," on Friday, April 17th following the Friday Forum. More than 150 members, students, staff, and faculty attended a free outdoor concert which was designed to raise awareness and funds for the ASI Food Pantry's end-of-the-year food distributions for students experiencing food insecurity. The event was supported by ASI Student Services, the Renaissance Society, and Sacramento Blues Society, along with Sac State's School of Music which coordinated a student jazz quartet, KSSU Radio for sound support and MC help, and ASI Student Engagement and Outreach for venue booking, picnic blankets and chairs. The concert was held on Capistrano Lawn following the Renaissance Society Friday Forum.



Lowdown Delta and Piedmont Front Porch Blues performed along with Little Village Recording artist and new host of "Mick Martin's Blues Party" on K-ZAP Radio, Kyle Rowland, who was the MC. Also joining was Dirty Laundry's Marcus Veliz, who was the Sacramento Blues Society representative to the International Blues Challenge in Memphis earlier this year. Sac State's own blues student musicians performed the second upbeat, jazzy set with Brandon Bagley on guitar, Alejandro Giles on bass and Aaron Kitzes on drums.

ASI Food Pantry's manager Ryan Choi shared, "From brainstorming this idea over an Autumn lunch conversation to fully planning a 2-hour Spring concert with five on-campus groups and off-campus organizations joining together, I've been deeply encouraged by how beautiful this community is. Renaissance members deserve to know how much we appreciate the First Friday donations and weekly volunteers, who make it possible for the ASI Food Pantry to keep feeding hungry students. This concert was our way of saying thank you, and celebrating the gift of music in our community, together.

The Sacramento Blues Society (SBS) has a long and prominent place in Sacramento. Founded in 1979, it is based on their mission to promote and preserve blues music as the original American art form. SBS is the third oldest Blues Society in the United States.

The SBS and the Sac State's School of Music will soon announce the first recipient of the new Little Charlie Baty Memorial Music Scholarship. "Little Charlie" Baty, master guitarist, and a fearless blues and jazz musician, passed away in 2020. This scholarship honors Baty's commitment to the SBS "Blues in Schools" program and supports the Sacramento Blues Society's commitment to continuing the education and preservation of blues music. It will be awarded annually to a student in the School of Music within the College of Arts and Letters, at Sac State.

The Sacramento Blues Society loves to connect with all aspects of the community through BLUES – involving artists, labels, radio, students, schools, venues, promoters and FANS. Membership fees, sponsorships and grants fund the bulk of their events and educational programs. SBS is a 501(c)(3) non-profit and proud affiliate member of The Blues Foundation. More information can be found at www.sacblues.org

Conservative Activists May Actually Be “Woke”

by Darryl Freeman

Conservative groups have initiated dozens of lawsuits since the Supreme Court’s decision in 2023 that ended affirmative action in college admissions. They champion the concept that no public or private programs should specifically help minority groups. The present federal government administration has supported this conservative political perspective by dismantling federal programs that promote diversity, equity and promoting a policy of calling for the “termination of all discriminatory programs” in the government.

More than a century ago, black activist W. E. B. Du Bois famously declared that “the problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color line,” identifying race as the central dividing force in American life. That insight continues to shape modern policy debates, particularly those surrounding diversity, equity, and inclusion. For many contemporary advocates, race-conscious remedies are justified and necessary to address inequalities rooted in that enduring “color line.”

Yet another strand of thought—also with deep roots in liberal philosophy—points in a different direction. Martin Luther King Jr. articulated perhaps its most enduring expression in his hope that individuals would “not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.” This vision, often described as colorblind universalism, has increasingly been invoked by critics of DEI policies. As one attorney litigating anti- DEI cases recently explained, “We’re looking for neutrality... not a culture of white racial grievance about the treatment of minorities.” Far from rejecting liberal ideals, this argument draws upon them—emphasizing equal treatment under neutral rules rather than race-conscious intervention.

Conservative commentators have embraced the recent comments made by NASA astronaut Victor Glover, the African American pilot of the Orion space capsule that recently orbited the moon. Reflecting on his role as a visible milestone for underrepresented groups, described a personal “dichotomy”: pride that “young, Brown boys and girls can look at me... and say, ‘he looks like me,’” coupled with the hope that “one day we don’t have to talk about these firsts... that this is just human history.” His remarks capture both the immediate value of identity-based recognition and the longer-term aspiration to move beyond it.

Taken together, these perspectives suggest that today’s debates over DEI are not simply clashes between opposing ideologies but rather contests between competing interpretations of the same intellectual inheritance. If Du Bois identified the centrality of race, and King envisioned its eventuality, then the current debate may actually be about how and when, not IF society needs to change. Additionally, the social conservative perspective on DEI, may have some statistically and quantitative “wokeness” to it. Here are a couple of statistically and quantitative factual based perspectives which have liberal roots, but in explanation can be used by social conservatives as evidence that their post racial vision has solid neutral factual support.

First, according to Census data, the number of Americans identifying as two or more races increased by 35 million people from roughly 3% of the population in 2010 to over 10% in 2020—one of the most rapid shifts in racial self-identification in modern U.S. history. The growth of multiracial identification complicates binary racial foundations. As multiracial populations grow, traditional racial categories become less identifiable. Policy motivations based strictly on race become harder to define and justify.

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Second, while the United States does not maintain a formal caste system, its population is nonetheless stratified along economic lines into racial, ethnic and politically meaningful categories. One of the U.S. Census Bureau measures identifies those people living in poverty based on income thresholds required to meet basic needs. Those households with earnings below those incomes are considered to be living in poverty. Of the roughly 37 million Americans living in poverty, about 15.5 million are non-Hispanic white, 10.5 million are Hispanic, 8.5 million are black, with smaller numbers among Asian and Native American populations—figures that show both the broad reach of poverty and its uneven impact across racial/ethnic groups. This underscores the extent to which economic deprivation cuts across racial categories and warrant broader class, not race/ethnicity economic public policies assisting the poor.

Seen this way, some of today’s most forceful conservative activist critiques of DEI are NOT a departure from “woke” thought, but an extension of older liberal ideals—that seek to move beyond race altogether rather than organize public life around it.

Conservative activists are, in effect, advancing a traditionally “liberal” colorblind universalist framework. The questions to be evidently litigated it seems are the how and when to effect the change.

ASI Food Pantry
LOOKING AHEAD
APRIL 2026

Budget Update:

This fiscal year 2025-2026, we have access to \$350K of state basic needs funding to cover ops: (staff wages, food purchases, equipment and gas, rent).

This will be the last year we receive these annual funds. Starting July 1st, 2026, we will begin operating solely on donations raised and our emergency reserves.

Category	2025-2026	2026-2027
Expenses	\$450,000	\$190,000
Emergency Reserves	\$300,000	\$0
State Funding	\$150,000	\$0
Donations Needed	\$0	\$190,000
Purchased Food and Toiletries for Students + Reserves for Next Year	\$0	\$130,000
Payroll	\$0	\$25,000
Vehicles, Gas, and Equipment	\$0	\$7,350
Donation Management	\$0	\$800
Operating Expenses	\$0	\$24,350
Rent	\$0	\$24,300

We have planned 3 crucial steps to maintain our operation:

- Strengthen partnerships to increase the quality, volume, and variety of food available for students, that can be purchased at lower rates or donated.
- Increase fundraising efforts and apply for regional/local grants to cover recurring expenses.
- Maintain the same number of student and full-time staff jobs to ensure minimal disruption to services.

To support with ongoing operations, we are looking to raise an additional \$2,000/wk or \$104,000/yr which would maintain food access for the 3,000+ students who utilize the ASI Food Pantry.

Meaningful support during this time can look like hosting donation drives (cash/check), signing up to donate fruit/vegetables from your backyard, or connecting the ASI Food Pantry to corporations and foundations for employee payroll-deduction. Email us at asi-foodpantry@csus.edu for more info!

Renaissance Society Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting will take place on May 8, 2026, during our final Forum session. The location is Amador Hall 153. During this meeting, we will:

- Award the Warren Bonta Diversity and Inclusion Award winner
- Announce the 2025-2026 Scholarship winners
- Welcome Dr. Luke Wood, President of Sacramento State University
- Celebrate 2025-2026 Accomplishments
- Vote on 2026-2027 Board of Directors

INTRODUCING YOUR PROGRAM COMMITTEE

by Jackie Lamb

Have you enjoyed seminars or Shared Interest Groups (SIG)? Enjoyed various speakers? Have you joined the adventures in the Summer Program? Have you wondered how all these opportunities happen?

Thanks go to your fellow members who serve on the Program Committee. From listening to you and other members as to what you like, or want to have included in Renaissance Society programs, to searching and finding Program Leaders and speakers is what the Program Committee does. Both semesters and the Summer Program are brought to you by your fellow members:

Rick Atkinson, Sandy Britton, Roberta Gleeson, Dale Good, Kathy Hart, Allan Keown, Debra Martinez, Deborah Seiler, Phil Sexton.

When you see them, please tell them thanks. The committee is chaired by Jackie Lamb.

In addition to the tasks listed above, the Program Committee also works to support the Program Leaders in many different ways. This current year the committee has offered a Mentoring Project for new Leaders, a Zoom meeting of all Program leaders to share ideas and issues with one another, and two Program Leader Workshops.

In response to member feedback, asking for learning and fun experiences outside the usual classroom lecture experience, the committee offered:

- A tour and lecture with the Effie Yeaw Nature Center,
- Balance Class in cooperation with Sacramento Ballet,
- Peter, Paul, and Mary Concert

The committee found these activities popular and well attended. So going forward you will be seeing other such opportunities.

The committee also has considered issues and concerns from both the Program Leaders, and members, including a Survey of those who attended the Orientation session. Topics such as evaluation of what we offer, difficulties with technology, Closed classes, travel to campus, requests for more In Person classes, etc. have been considered. As part of these discussions, we have identified another space where we will be able to offer more In Person classes Monday through Thursday. Of course, costs for other projects which require space outside the campus are often limited by the rent and sometimes equipment rentals.

Finally, the committee assists Lorene Sarne with edits to the Program Leader Application process, Registration, and publishing of the catalogue. While she does all the heavy lifting, the committee helps in whatever we can. Please when you see her, offer your thanks.

2026-2027 Board Of Directors Nominees

Renaissance Society will vote on our Board of Directors at the Annual meeting on May 8.
Nominees are:

President: Jackie Lamb

Vice President: Vacant

Secretary: Janet Heath

Members at Large: Michael Blixt, Mahnaz Khazari, Carol Stanford, and Anne Rewell
Marian Sheppard and Bob Silva are continuing as Members at Large

Scam Alert – Again!

Most of you are aware that Renaissance Board Members, especially the Presidents, have been victims of email scams for several years. It seems particularly prevalent this year. Most of the scams have been impersonations of board members via email requesting help procuring gift certificates. There may have been some phone calls as well. This week, the Sacramento State Police Department has advised us of a phone scam from an individual claiming to be an employee of the Sacramento State Police Department requesting bail money on behalf of a student who purportedly was in custody. This call and the email scams are fraudulent.

What You Should Do:

- Do not provide money or personal information to unsolicited callers or emails.
- If you receive a suspicious call, hang up immediately.
- Stay alert and help protect all of us.
- Verify the situation by contacting the person who was purportedly issuing the request.

