

President's Message



Deborah Seiler

President

The Renaissance Society
of Sacramento

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

Key Dates

Wednesday Nov. 1

*Deadline for all submissions
for the Spring 2024 catalog*

Monday Nov. 6

Board of Directors meeting

Wednesday Nov. 15

Spring Registration Opens

Friday Dec. 8

End of Semester Forum

Friday Dec. 8

*Holiday Dinner at Engrained
Restaurant*

Friday Dec. 15

Program Leaders Workshop



How Long Can We Provide the Current Level of Service?

As we celebrate the 37th year of our Renaissance Society, let's reflect a bit on the past, present, and future of our organization.

Renaissance began in 1986 with four seminars, each focused on the theme of "personal freedom," and all were held in the basement of the Sac State library. About 40 members attended each seminar and the discussions were described as "lively." The very first Forum, on September 26 1986, was a presentation about "Personal Freedom in Today's World Civilizations" by a UC Davis anthropologist. Membership dues were \$35.

By contrast, during the 2022-2023 academic year Renaissance offered 83 seminars, 75 single presentations, 55 Shared Interest Groups, 15 community presentations, and 25 Forums. Since 2018 membership dues are \$100 the equivalent of \$35 in 1986 dollars but with many times the learning opportunities. Our programming has continued to expand, undoubtedly beyond what the founders ever envisioned.

Membership and operating revenue have dropped since 2019

Renaissance membership grew continuously from about 150 in 1986 to a peak of 2,300 in 2019, but then it dropped sharply due to COVID. Last year we ended with 1,722 members, and today we stand at 1,467, a 37% decrease from 2019 levels resulting in a revenue loss of about \$85,000. Why does this matter? Because Renaissance is funded solely by membership dues and the generosity of members who are willing and able to "Give Something Extra." According to our year-end financial reports for 2022-2023, operating revenues were only 90% of the projected amount. We avoided a deficit only because of unanticipated staff salary savings.

Some Renaissance members are surprised to learn that we are not a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. Non-profit tax status is not available to us because of our affiliation with the university, and it means we are not able to solicit tax deductible donations. Clearly, *increasing membership is crucial to our financial well-being!*

Our Ethnic Diversity and Age

When the Society was formed in 1986, the makeup of the community and the campus looked much different than it does today. That year, among 55-year-old Sacramentans, 76% were Caucasian, 8% Asian, 8% Hispanic, 7% African American, .07% Native American. Today Sacramento County is 44% Caucasian, 17% Asian, 19% Hispanic, 9% African American, 0.8% Native American. (See chart on page 8). *(continued on page 2).*

For the first 36 years of our organization, we did not collect demographic information from our members. This year we started to collect our demographic data and what we found illustrates a major imbalance in our racial/ethnic makeup compared with the Sacramento community.

Today, Renaissance membership is 80% Caucasian, 3% Asian, 3% Hispanic, 2% African American, and 0.35% Native American, and 8% decline to state (see chart below).

We also did not collect age information until this year, and the data show that 75% of our members are between 70 and 90 years old, 18% of our members are 60 to 69 years old, and about 1% are in their 50's or younger.

Good news and work to be done – a plea to each of you

Renaissance has been wonderful for its members and for Sac State Students. In the past year, we contributed \$40,000 to the Food Pantry and received the Golden Plate award for the past two years for our fund raising during the Thanksgiving food drive.

To date, we have given over \$269,000 in total student scholarships and two of the seven scholarships we give each year are now endowed.

However, if we are to thrive and continue to

provide these services *we need to take bold action to increase our membership, including younger and more diverse people to carry on this organization!*

Interestingly, we are quite diverse in our backgrounds as educators, social workers, legal and medical professionals, farmers, administrators, librarians, entrepreneurs, and, yes, even an election official, like me. This diversity has contributed to the richness of our programing and the fascinating social events we enjoy.

Ask yourself how you can reach out to help us sustain this 37-year-old momentum by recruiting people who may not look like you.

Please consider that in September, I asked the Board of Directors for authority to establish a working group to encourage cohorts of people from diverse communities to join our Society, and they agreed. *Would you be willing to be a member of this working group?* Contact me at deborah.seiler2@gmail.com or call 916 704-5735. We will embrace and welcome your participation and energy. Join me in efforts to ensure our Renaissance Society survives and also thrives for future generations.

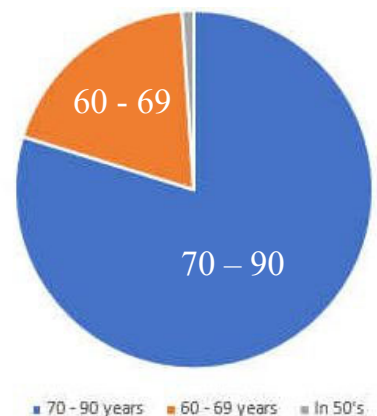
Deborah



Renaissance Member Ethnicity



Renaissance Member Age



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November Forums

Nov 3

Jaime Mason

Stacking Hearts: Redemption Coffee's Mission Behind Bars and Beyond the Gates



Jaime Mason is the Director and Chief Empowerment Officer with the Rio Consumnes Correctional Center Coffee Education and Barista Program, which she founded in 2021. Mason has been in the specialty coffee industry since 1995, starting

as a teenage mall barista, and as a barista trainer for Bewley's North America. Her unique path and skills have been highlighted in Capital Public Radio's Insight, Barista Magazine, Roast Magazine, and KFBK's John McGinness Show. Her program equips incarcerated women with valuable coffee skills such as pulling the perfect espresso shot and pouring intricate latte art, thereby allowing her to place her alumna, upon their release, in jobs at major Sacramento roasters including Bewley's and Old Soul.

Nov 17

Ryan Mallory

Supporting Struggling Readers Through Volunteer Service



As the Program Manager for Sacramento's Experience Corps program, Ryan Mallory is responsible for a volunteer-based tutoring program that engages literacy tutors for primary grade students. Ryan combines his experiences as an English language instructor in

Bangkok, Thailand, and Expanded Learning Manager at Sierra View Elementary to guide training and professional development for volunteers. Ryan advocates for increased funding for summer reading programs and building home libraries. Ryan represented the Center in the 2022 All-America City Awards alongside leaders in Sacramento's Literacy and Housing organizations. He holds a BA in English from Sac State. This Forum will focus on the literacy landscape of Sacramento, the diversity of student populations, and opportunities for members of the 50+ community to contribute to improved reading outcomes for local children.



Two Music Students Awarded \$1,000 Grants

By Robert Seyfried

On Friday, May 19, 2023, members of the Renaissance Spring Classical Music Seminar met in Room 151 of Capistrano Hall to award grants of \$1,000 each to two music students. The recipients, Selena Delgadillo and Alejandro Lara-Agraz, are students in our School of Music and were selected by the faculty on the basis of academic achievement and need.

The presentation ceremony was conducted by Leo Eylar and Bob Seyfried, Seminar Leaders, and Steven Blumberg, Dean of the Sac State School of Music. Two members of the seminar presented each recipient a check for \$1,000.

Following the awards ceremony the two recipients Selena Delgadillo, piano and Alejandro Lara-Agraz, trumpet, played several classical duos for our seminar attendees and, as expected, each played beautifully.

This was a most enjoyable and rewarding ceremony and both Bob Seyfried and Leo Eylar thank our most generous attendees for making this happen.



DINING TOGETHER

By Cheryl Nelson

Dining Together will meet at
CANTINA AZTECA
6400 Fair Oaks Blvd., (cantinaazteca.com) at
5:30 PM on Wednesday, November 8, 2023.

Dining Together members who wish to attend should RSVP to Barbara Hurley by email:
barbarahurley10@comcast.net or phone at
916-565-0370 no later than November 3, 2023.

Plan to bring cash (including small bills) as separate checks may not be available. Parking is available.



Renaissance Society and the ASI Food Bank: It's Time To Talk Turkey!

by Carol Barake, Volunteer Services Chair

The Renaissance Volunteer Services Chair contacted Ryan Choi, Associated Students Inc. (ASI) Food Pantry Coordinator, to determine the needs for the annual Thanksgiving Food Basket drive. 200 family size baskets will be prepared to meet the demand, with approximately thirteen items in each basket.

Ryan indicated that while food donations are always welcome, cash donations allow them to purchase high quality products at discounted prices and ensure that the quality level of the items in each basket is consistent.

The Food Pantry also struggles with storage of

the items prior to the food basket assembly. Using cash donations to order items in bulk allows delivery just prior to assembly.

Donations will be appreciated in the first two weeks of November. A \$40 donation will buy a family basket!

Cash contributions for in-person classes will be collected on the first Friday, November 3rd. The Renaissance Society website has a Donate button on the home page linking members to the Food Pantry donation form. Instructions for credit card donations, mailing checks or drop off information for cash and checks is provided.



Our purpose at the ASI Food Pantry is to help alleviate the hunger crisis on campus and decrease the negative impact that food insecurity has on the academic success of our student community



The ASI Food Pantry provides food and basic necessities, at no cost, to Sac State students facing financial challenges and food insecurity. We also connect students to additional resources on & off campus for further assistance.

Fresh food for healthy students

The Food Bank is continuing to expand the sources of fresh food donations to ensure a healthy diet for students. Renaissance member donations of fresh produce from their gardens are always appreciated. The ASI Food Pantry is partnering with Soil Born Harvest to assist with harvest efforts, for example vineyard or fruit tree harvesting. Members may contact Ryan Choi through the website for assistance in connecting to the contact for fresh food harvest.

Renaissance Society commitment to student health and well-being

The Renaissance Society has been a dedicated supporter of the ASI Food Bank since it began in 2015. The creation of the Food Bank on the Sac State campus was part of a CSU system-wide effort to address the rising number of food and housing insecure students. The efforts to address the problem and support students both inside and outside the classroom have grown in importance.

(continued from page 4)

47% of Sac State students report struggling with food insecurity, and 13% report being homeless during their college career. Their grade points are affected, and their anxiety levels are high. One in four students are parents or supporting a dependent while seeking a degree.

Food insecurity rose sharply during the pandemic, driving a larger number of students on campus to seek assistance at the food pantry. Pressure on students is continuing to mount as housing, gas and food prices are seeing significant inflation, and students are struggling to remain on campus.

Whether we contribute to the envelopes passed around the in-person classes on campus on the first Friday of the month, or hit the big, yellow DONATE button on our website, we make a difference in the lives of these students. In the past year, Renaissance members contributed \$40,000 to the Food Pantry and received the Golden Plate award for the past two years in recognition of our efforts. We will have another opportunity to contribute to students on November 3. (And, of course, every month after that!)

If you do not attend in-person classes on Fridays, or if you simply prefer the on-line donation option, the Renaissance link to the Food Pantry donation page provides directions for credit card donations, mailing checks and drop off location for checks and cash on campus.

Renaissance members are also welcome to volunteer at the ASI Food Pantry and the campus pop-ups for food distribution. Five of our Renaissance members are already volunteering on a weekly basis, and more hands are needed. Anyone interested may contact Ryan Choi via the website and he will assist with placement.

Thanks to all the Renaissance members who contribute so much throughout the year. May you and your loved ones have a wonderful Thanksgiving holiday. We can all smile thinking about those students having enough food to make it through the semester and enjoying a special treat on Thanksgiving.



Food Pantry Volunteer: Assist during open hours at the Pantry. Volunteers will greet and help students when they come in, pay attention to the specific needs of each student, explain what the ASI Food Pantry is and how it works & help keep shelves neat and organized.

Stocking Volunteer: Help unload deliveries into the ASI Food Pantry. Volunteers will help sort through items, label items and organize the food onto the shelves.

Pop Up Volunteer: Help during the Free Groceries Pop Ups. Volunteers will be hands on with produce distribution.

Dimensions of American Diversity California's Punjabi and Mexican Communities

By Darryl O. Freeman

The U.S. Southwest is dotted with Punjabi-Mexican enclaves in California, Texas, and Arizona. One such enclave is Yuba City, California. The Punjabi-Mexicans of this locale trace their origins to a population of Punjabi migrant men who settled as agricultural laborers in California during the first decades of the 1900s, before the Asiatic Barred Zone Act of 1917 restricted nearly all immigration from Asia. (Punjabi is a region of northern India and Pakistan). These men were largely restricted from entering the United States with wives or other family members because of anti-Asian immigration policy, which sought to prevent the entry of nonwhite immigrant populations into the U.S. except as a source of cheap and disposable labor.

In response to poor working conditions and poor wages, Punjabi workers pooled their resources, leased land, and grew their own crops, thereby establishing themselves in the newly budding farming economy of northern California. (Immigration law at the time did not allow them to own land). In the early 20th century, Mexican women often lived and worked near male Punjabi immigrants, increasing the likelihood of marriages between the two groups. Moreover, driven north by the political and economic tumult of the Mexican Revolution, Mexican families began to settle in the agricultural regions California throughout the 1910s. Thus, it was no coincidence that many Mexican families farmed land alongside Punjabis.

The first recorded marriages between Punjabi men and Mexican women occurred in 1916. Punjabi men

sought local women whom they could legally marry, for both companionship and as a source of domestic labor. (When they registered for a marriage certificate, they could both identify race as “brown”.) Also, Mexican women could legally own land. As Karen Leonard, a professor of anthropology at the University of California at Irvine explained in her book *Making Ethnic Choices: California's Punjabi Mexican Americans*, “Many Punjabi men married Mexican women who worked on their land because of their cultural similarities and proximity. Mexicans and Punjabis shared a rural way of life; with similar types of food and family values, and thus maintained a similar material and social culture.”

Husbands and wives spoke to each other in rudimentary English or Spanish. Punjabi men learned Spanish to communicate with Mexican agricultural laborers and to speak to their wives. Some Punjabi men adopted Spanish names or nicknames: Miguel for Maghar, Andrés for Inder, Mondo for Mohammed.

Cooking in the home drew from both Mexican and Punjabi cuisines and the men taught their wives to cook chicken curry, roti and various vegetable curries. For example, the Rasul family in Yuba City ran the only Mexican restaurant the “El Rancho” in California that featured chicken curry and roti, until it closed in 1993.

Most children born of Punjabi-Mexican marriages were raised Catholic and spoke Spanish in their homes. This Punjabi-Mexican generation became known locally as “half and halves” and many members recall facing prejudice from both Anglo and Mexican schoolmates.

While Punjabi-Mexican communities are not highly visible, the bicultural community retains strong bonds to the unlikely legacy of their ancestors. As a member of the community, Isabel Singh Garcia, explained to the LA Times in 1987: “I don't want what our fathers did to be forgotten [...] I'm Indian and I'm Mexican and I'm 100% American.” (Latina.com)

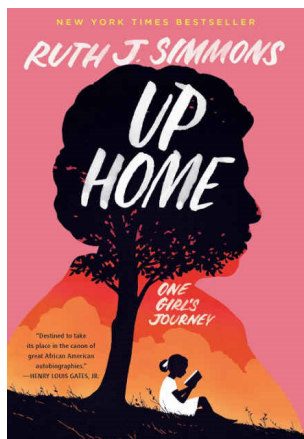


“Punjabi-Mexican Wedding”. Source: <https://www.saada.org/item/20150317-4088>

READINGS ON DIVERSITY

By Robert Benedetti and Roberta Gleason
In our on-going commitment to former-President Nelsen's campus-wide plan to end discrimination and prejudice, we present our latest.

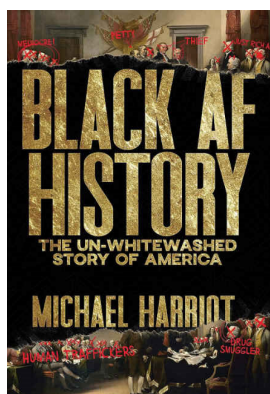
Up Home: One Girl's Journey, by Ruth Simmons,



Born in 1945, Ruth J. Simmons grew up the twelfth child of sharecroppers. Her first home had no running water, no electricity, no books to read. Yet despite this — or, in her words, because of it — Simmons would become the first Black president of an Ivy League university. The former president of Smith

College, Brown University, and Prairie View A&M, Texas's oldest HBCU, Simmons has inspired generations of students as she herself made history.

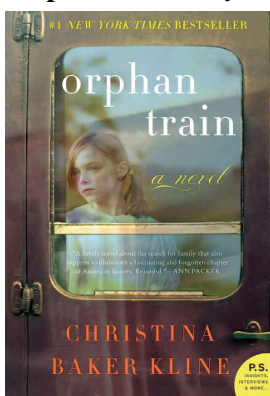
Black AF History: The Un-Washed Story of America by Michael Harriot



Michael Harriot presents a more accurate version of American history. Combining unapologetically provocative storytelling with meticulous research based on primary sources as well as the work of pioneering Black historians, scholars, and journalists, Harriot removes the white sugarcoating from the American story, placing

Black people squarely at the center. With incisive wit, Harriot speaks hilarious truth to oppressive power, subverting conventional historical narratives with little-known stories about the experiences of Black Americans. From the African Americans who arrived before 1619 to the unenslavable bandit who inspired America's first police force, this long overdue corrective provides a revealing look into our past that is as urgent as it is necessary. For too long, we have refused to acknowledge that American history is white history. Not this one. This history is Black AF.

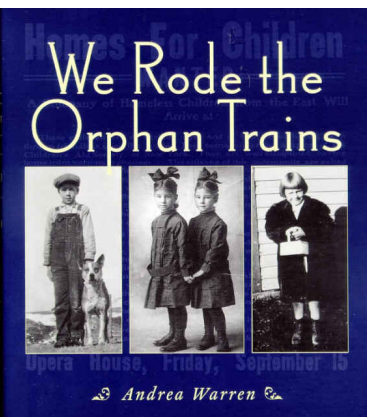
Orphan Train by Kristina Kline



Between 1854 and 1929, so-called orphan trains ran regularly from the cities of the East Coast to the farmlands of the Midwest, carrying thousands of abandoned children whose fates would be determined by pure luck. Would they be adopted by a kind and loving family, or would they face a childhood and adolescence of hard labor and servitude?

As a young Irish immigrant, Vivian Daly was one such child, sent by rail from New York City to an uncertain future a world away. Returning east later in life, Vivian leads a quiet, peaceful existence on the coast of Maine, the memories of her upbringing rendered a hazy blur. But in her attic, hidden in trunks, are vestiges of a turbulent past.

We Rode the Orphan Trains by Andrea Warren



They were “throwaway” kids, living in the streets or in orphanages and foster homes. Then Charles Loring Brace, a young minister working with the poor in New York City, started the Children's Aid Society and devised a plan to give homeless children a chance to find families to call their own.

Thus began an extraordinary migration of American children. Between 1854 and 1929, an estimated 200,000 children, mostly from New York and other cities of the eastern United States, ventured forth to other states on a journey of hope.

Andrea Warren has shared the stories of some of these orphan train riders here, including those of: Betty, who found a fairy tale life in a grand hotel; Nettie Evans and her twin, Nellie, who were rescued from their first abusive placement and taken in by a new, kindhearted family who gave them the love they had hoped for; brothers Howard and Fred, who remained close even though they were adopted into different families; and Edith, who longed to know the secrets of her past.



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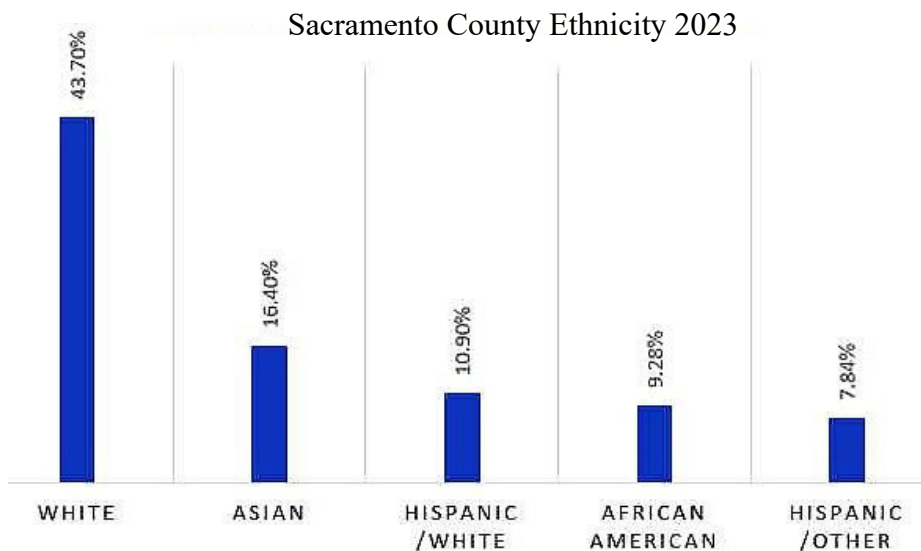
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December Submissions Due: November 2



Bar charts courtesy of Marian Kile