



Jackie Lamb

President

The Renaissance Society
of Sacramento
288jac@gmail.com

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

Key Dates

Friday Forums

Friday, September 4

Larry Lee, President and Publisher, The Observer Media Group
3 pm

Friday, September 11

Steve Swatt, Susie Swatt, Rebecca LaVally, co-authors, "Paving the Way: Women's Struggle for Political Equality in California"
3 pm

Friday, September 18

Benjy Egel, Senior Food Editor, ABRIDGED by KVIE
3 pm

Friday, September 25

Agustin Arteaga, PhD, Mort and Marcy Friedman Director and CEO, Crocker Art Museum
3 pm

THE RENAISSANCE RECORDER

California State University, Sacramento

Lifelong Learning Since 1986

President's Message

It has been a wonderful beginning to the 2026 Semester. The Discovery Day and Open House were the largest ever, doubling the number of participants from last year. For those who attended, I hope you were able to learn more about all the programs and activities that make up the Renaissance Society. I was personally very pleased to see and meet so many new members. WELCOME!! There are a few photos from the event provided on page 9.

I want to recognize all the volunteers who helped plan and work at the event. There are too many to name. THANKS TO ONE AND ALL!!

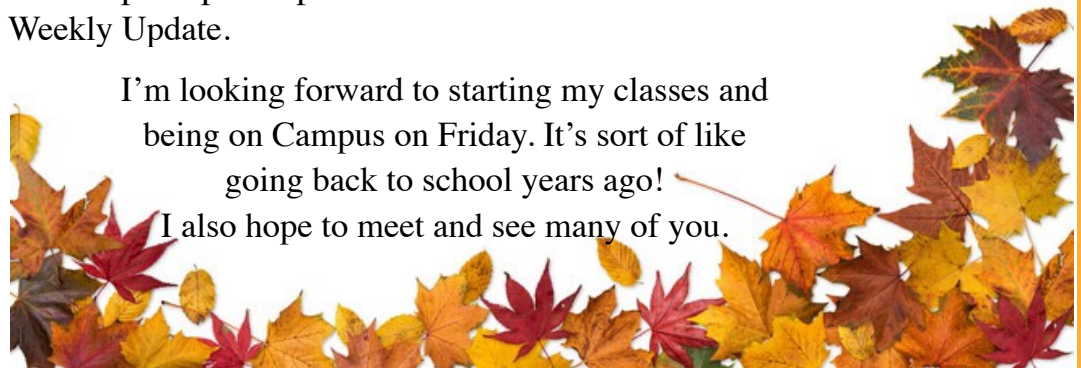
By the time you are reading this article, you probably have registered for the program, seminar, SIGs, and Forums that interest you. We hope that you have been able to register for your choices. If not, you are on a waitlist which will be monitored by the Program Leader. When an opening occurs the next person in line is contacted to see if they still want the one they selected. So watch your email for such notices.

If, for some reason, you decide to not continue one of the classes, **PLEASE LET THE PROGRAM LEADER KNOW** which allows us to clear the waiting lists. It isn't like college with a "DROP" routine but we ask that you let us know.

This year is our 40th Anniversary, which we plan to celebrate all year long with an event each quarter-4 IN 40TH!. The first event is a **Wine Tour** with tasting and food scheduled for **October 1st**. This will be a bus tour with special parking on campus, where the bus will pick up and drop off participants. Watch for much more information in the Weekly Update.

I'm looking forward to starting my classes and being on Campus on Friday. It's sort of like going back to school years ago!

I also hope to meet and see many of you.



Join Renaissance Members for the Ohana Walk on September 19th

By Deborah Seiler

Want to spend a beautiful September 19 morning getting some exercise while benefiting a partner organization? Ohana means “family” and the Ohana Walk is a family friendly event to benefit ACC, which offers senior living options and provides services such as Meals on Wheels, rides, and help for seniors to run errands.

The Walk

Enjoy a scenic, customizable walk along the Greenhaven-Pocket Canal Parkway, followed by a community picnic at the ACC Campus.

- Choose between a 1-mile, 2-mile, or 3-mile route.
- All routes are flat, wheelchair accessible, and family-friendly.
- Includes an optional 1/2-mile shaded greenbelt add-on.

Meet the Renaissance group between 8 and 8:15 am. Look for our sign. The walk begins at **8:30 am**.

No matter which route you choose, we all start and finish at the ACC Campus located at 7334 Park City Drive. With water stations, rest markers, and fun-filled check-in booths along the way, you will be feeling the ALOHA spirit!



The 2023 walking group

The Cost

The cost is \$45 which includes a T shirt, swag bag, and lunch. It also includes access to the campus, which will be a lively scene with music, chances to win prizes, and lots of community booths. Yes! Our Renaissance Society will have a table to share information about our organization. Drop by and say hello to visitors.

This is a fun way to meet other Renaissance members and learn more about various community organizations. Bring a friend!

What To Do

To sign up, go to <https://acc.rallyup.com/c/ohana2026> and click on **Teams**. Scroll down to **Renaissance Walkers** and join. If you have any questions, please contact Deborah Seiler at Deborah.seiler2@gmail.com or call **916 704 5735**.

FULL PLATE/FULL CIRCLE **A NEW PILOT PROGRAM**

Jackie Lamb

Bob Boyer, a Renaissance member, suggested that we build intergenerational relationships between our members and the students. His idea was for RS members to take a student to lunch once a month, with the cap being \$25.00 per student. Bob was concerned about the numbers of students who are food insecure and thought this might help.



As President, I reached out to Ryan Choi who manages the Food Pantry, to ask if he thought this would work. After several planning sessions we have decided to do a Pilot project for this semester. We have 6 Board members who have agreed to be the hosts for 2 students each, once a month.

We asked that the students come up with the name for this project. They suggested the Full Plate/Full Circle title. The “Full Circle” obviously related to the intergenerational aspect of the program.

We are all eager to see how this works, and if successful, we will to expand it for the Spring Semester.

I’m pleased to recognize Bob for his idea and charity. I am always ready to hear the member’s new ideas, so keep them coming.

The ASI Food Pantry's Upcoming Fall Activities

By Ryan Choi

Celebrating 10 Years Together!

This September marks 10 years of the ASI Food Pantry serving Sac State students, and we want the Renaissance Society there to celebrate with us! Join us on Monday, September 14, from 12:30–2:00 pm in the University Union Ballroom. There will be free food, an art and history gallery of the ASI Food Pantry, music, and fun games like “Guess that Vegetable!” — students, staff, faculty, and RS members are all invited. Reach out to us if you would like a free parking pass. Come celebrate 10 years of community with us!

Renaissance Society Open House: A Record Turnout

We're grateful for an incredible showing at this fall's Renaissance Society Open House! Thirty-five RS members signed our volunteer interest form — double the number who signed up last Fall semester. Thank you for showing up for our students in such numbers; we can't wait to welcome you when the students return on August 31.

Friendsgiving Feast Returns November 24–25

Save the date! Our Friendsgiving Feast returns this year on Tuesday, November 24 and Wednesday, November 25, offering Sac State students two sit-down holiday meals complete with all the traditional fixings. We'll be collecting cash donations to help cover the cost of both meals — every gift helps us welcome more students to the table. Renaissance Society and ASI Food Pantry will be tracking donations made by members from October 1st–November 24, as part of the Golden Plate Award competition.

New This fall:

Donate Your Homegrown Harvest

Do you have fruit trees or a garden overflowing this season? Renaissance Society members can now donate homegrown fruits and vegetables directly to the ASI Food Pantry — just drop them off on Fridays, 9:00am–3:00pm!

Some of our community's favorites:

- Apples
- Pears
- Stone fruit (plums, peaches)
- Pomegranates
- Persimmon
- Eggplant



ASI Volunteers





Bob Lang lived a life defined by music, broadcasting, storytelling, and teaching. A beloved broadcaster, musician, author, educator, and dedicated media historian, he passed away peacefully at home on May 31, 2026, at the age of 79 after a courageous battle with ALS. For decades, he was a vibrant and familiar presence on the Sacramento airwaves and in the region's music community.

Born with a passion for communication and entertainment, Bob launched his 30-year broadcasting career in August 1969 at Modesto's legendary KTRB radio station. He quickly captivated listeners during his mid-morning program with his quick wit, infectious humor, and remarkable comedic timing. He brought numerous memorable scripted characters to life for local advertising campaigns and, for a time in the mid-1970s, entertained audiences under the on-air persona "Big Ben Boulder." In Sacramento, he worked at KZAP, Cool 101.1 FM and KCTC Soft 96 FM.

Bob later transitioned to television in Sacramento, where he built a successful career as a producer and writer as well as several on air personalities including "Swabby Bobby." Among his many accomplishments was producing and hosting the 1984 documentary *Our Gang: Inside the Clubhouse*, an archival retrospective celebrating *The Little Rascals* for which he received the Iris Award. Additionally he was recognized for his video tribute to the comic duo, Laurel and Hardy.

A gifted musician as well, Bob founded and fronted the Sacramento classic horn/rock band ON AIR in 1985, sharing his love of music with audiences throughout the region. In later years, he continued inspiring others as a corporate trainer, college instructor, author of three books, and devoted volunteer with the Modesto Radio Museum, where he helped preserve the rich history of broadcasting, and was a member of the Sacramento Valley Broadcast Legends. Sharing his experience, Bob taught mass media classes at American River and Sacramento City Colleges.

For 15 years, Bob was an active and cherished member of the Sacramento State Renaissance Society, where he combined his love of music with his gift for teaching. His popular classes on the history of rock and roll—from its beginnings through the 1970s—and on the legends of jazz became favorites among members. Drawing from his extensive personal archive, Bob brought each class to life with rare interview recordings, vintage videos, and behind-the-scenes stories that captivated his audiences.

Just as memorable were the conversations his classes inspired. Members eagerly shared their own memories of the music, the concerts they attended, and what it was like growing up during one of the most influential eras in popular music. It was always surprising to discover how many classmates had seen The Beatles perform live or had attended Woodstock. On occasion, the class would sing along to a favorite song, creating moments of joy, nostalgia, and connection.

During the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, Bob became the Renaissance Society's first instructor to harness the power of Zoom, providing members with a way to come together through music and friendship during a time of uncertainty and isolation. He always concluded each class with his signature "Bob's Bonus Tracks," a tradition that students eagerly anticipated and fondly remember.

Bob was predeceased by his wife Sandy, and is survived by his stepsons, Alan and Patrick Blackburn and grandson Daniel, and his lifelong friend and longtime partner, Jeannie Lennon, and a large community of extended family, cherished friends, fellow musicians, former students, and colleagues whose lives he touched over the years.

A Celebration of Life honoring Bob's legacy, music, and unmistakable voice will be held on Friday, September 11, 2026, from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. at the Wackford Valley Oak Ballroom, 9014 Bruceville Road, Elk Grove, California.

The afternoon will feature a special tribute by ON AIR, the band Bob founded in 1985, celebrating the music he loved and the joy he brought to so many.

Memorial donations may be made to the **ALS Association** in Bob's memory.



The Challenge of Historical Narratives

By Darryl Freeman

Last year, during the question and-answer period of one of my Renaissance seminar presentations, a member asked a question I will paraphrase: “How does one identify activities of our American historical heroes that are now considered immoral or even illegal without disparaging their otherwise heroic life histories?”

From my perspective, there is no inherent harm in historians and other researchers expanding the narrative of our country’s development. History is not simply a collection of established facts that should remain unchanged. It is an ongoing effort to understand the past more completely as new evidence is discovered and researchers ask questions earlier generations did not ask,

For example, the intellectual, military, and political accomplishments of George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and Andrew Jackson are not diminished when historians also investigate who quarried stone, cut timber, fired bricks, performed skilled carpentry, cultivated the land, and maintained their plantation homes. The same principle applies to corporations, universities, railroads, government buildings, banks, factories, and other American institutions. We can legitimately ask: Who conceived it? Whose labor built it? Who benefited from it? Monticello’s website directly addresses such questions.

In 2015, textbook publisher McGraw-Hill revised a section of its World Geography textbook after the mother of a Texas high school student challenged its description of enslaved Africans as “workers” who came to the southern United States to work on agricultural plantations. The issue was larger than the word “workers.” Placing enslaved Africans in a section on immigration could suggest voluntary migration rather than forced transportation and enslavement. McGraw-Hill promptly changed the digital edition and corrected subsequent print editions. The controversy was significant: roughly one-quarter of Texas’s approximately 1,200 school districts were using the textbook.

As a hot sauce aficionado, I was especially interested in a recent televised PBS program on the establishment of the multimillion-dollar Tabasco Company, founded by Edmund McIlhenny on Avery Island, Louisiana, after the Civil War. Historian Jeffrey Rothfeder, in *McIlhenny’s Gold: How a Louisiana Family Built the Tabasco Empire*, reports that formerly enslaved people on Avery Island advised McIlhenny during his early experiments with peppers and sometimes assisted in the small operation. This dimension of the story does not appear in the company’s online history or the PBS program. Acknowledging their influence does not diminish McIlhenny’s achievement or the company’s later success. By contrast, Jack Daniel’s openly acknowledges that Nathan “Nearest” Green, an enslaved African American distiller, taught Jack Daniel the craft of whiskey making.

The California State Railroad Museum in Sacramento and other historical institutions display Andrew J. Russell’s iconic 1869 “Joining of the Rails” photograph at Promontory Summit, Utah. It shows Central Pacific and Union Pacific locomotives facing one another amid a large crowd celebrating completion of the transcontinental railroad—but no identifiable Chinese railroad workers. That absence is striking because about 10,000 Chinese laborers worked on the Central Pacific. The National Park Service notes that twentieth-century histories frequently “obscured, even marginalized, or omitted” their contributions. Chinese workers were present at Promontory: on May 10, 1869, eight moved the final rail into position. Including them produces a more accurate account of an American

(Continued on page 7)



(Freeman - Continued from page 6)

accomplishment, not a more “negative” one.

This broader understanding of history is particularly important as the federal government reconsiders how the American story should be presented. In a March 2025 executive order, the Trump administration criticized interpretations that portray American institutions and achievements primarily through racism, sexism, and oppression, arguing that such narratives foster division and “national shame.” It subsequently directed federal museums and historical sites to emphasize the nation’s achievements, progress, and unifying ideals. I counter that acknowledging the contributions of enslaved people, Chinese railroad workers, Native Americans, women, and others traditionally absent from our historical narratives does not diminish American history. It completes it.

National accomplishment and historical criticism are not mutually exclusive. A society can recognize extraordinary achievements while acknowledging exploitation, exclusion, injustice, and people whose contributions went largely unrecorded. These plantation, corporate, textbook, and railroad stories demonstrate how the choice of who is included shapes what Americans understand about our history. Does telling us who actually built something disparage its history—or does leaving those people out diminish it?

Reference or Sources

From Slavery to Freedom—Legacies of Monticello’s Enslaved Families, www.Monticello.org

World Geography (2015), McGraw-Hill Education

Ellen Bresler Rockmore, “How Texas Teaches History,” *The New York Times*, October 21, 2015

Jeffrey Rothfeder, *McIlhenny’s Gold: How a Louisiana Family Built the Tabasco Empire* (2007)

Tabasco Company History website

Jack Daniel’s, “Our History” website

National Park Service, Golden Spike National Historical Park, Chinese Labor and the Iron Road



Summer Programs Update

by Kathy Hart

The Magic of Motown presentation on campus by Mike Agron was a huge success! We had 158 people attend in person with another 83 viewing it live on zoom. The link to the presentation was sent out to everyone who registered as well as posted to the RS Facebook page and included on our main RS webpage to help promote the kinds of excellent programs available throughout the year with RS.

Our final Summer Program for the year was a behind the scene experience with El Dorado Musical Theatre at the Harris Center in Folsom. EDMT hosted a group from the Renaissance Society for a fascinating presentation on the history of this fabulous theatre company and how they select the shows they produce. The presentation was followed by a wonderful backstage tour and short rehearsal by the cast of several numbers. Many members capped off the special event by enjoying a performance of 42nd Street—a truly memorable experience!

To see highlights from all our Summer Program events, including many additional photos, visit the Renaissance Society Facebook page at: <https://www.facebook.com/rensocietysac>. One of the easiest and most effective ways to introduce others to the Renaissance Society is to like our Facebook page and share a post with your own friends and family. Every share helps expand our reach and introduces more people—both near and far—to the enriching experiences our organization offers.

We asked members to send suggestions for future Summer Programs and compiled a long list of exciting opportunities. Be sure to join us for future special events as we Learn, Connect and Share while enriching our lives together.

HOW DOES IT HAPPEN?

WHO, WHAT, WHEN

Have you ever wondered how the array of classes, seminars and SIGs happen? Is there some computer app that just does it all? Oh, and what about the beautiful catalogue?

As President I want to be sure to acknowledge members and staff that make it all possible. Pictured are the members of the Program Committee, who not only help recruit new Program Leaders(PLs), but also provide two workshops each year for new and returning leaders and provide mentoring to newer PLs. This committee also develops rules of the road, policies and procedures. Recently, they have begun to also add other types of events that are off campus, with the opportunity for members to meet one another around a topic or tour.

The Committee is also responsible for the organization of the Discovery Day Program (Orientation). This event is planned to provide the best and latest information about all that Renaissance provides to you as members.

Once the applications to be a Program Leader have been received our very capable **Lorene Sarne** goes to work building the schedule for all programs. The size of her spreadsheets is very large. Once all the necessary information for the catalogue is ready, she asks others to review and edit it all. She also asks members to submit photos that they have taken to be included in the catalogue. When ready for Prime time, a consultant helps build it all into that very attractive catalogue.

In addition, the Official Program Guide is also completed and made available as soon as possible in the process.

A subcommittee develops and directs the very successful Summer Program. This requires developing a list of potential events, contacting the community organizations, setting up a calendar, managing the reservations and announcements. A special recognition of **Kathy Hart** who manages the Eventbrite reservations, including waitlist, cancellations and all is done to help members have a good Summer experience.

So, when you see any of these members, or Lorene, please tell them how much you appreciate all they do. Remember they are members just like you and volunteer. Maybe you will think about joining the committee or volunteering to help with an event. We would love to add you to our team!



Back Row Left to Right: Phil Sexton, Dennis Beaty, Carol Barake, Sandy Britton, Jackie Lamb
Front Row left to Right: Dale Good, Debbie Martinez, Deborah Seiler.
Missing: Roberta Gleeson, Kathy Hart and Alan Kweon.



New Program Committee Co-Chairs
Debbie Martinez and Sandy Britton.

Discovery Day & Open House 2026 had the highest recorded registration since we began using Eventbrite in Jan '23. 284 people registered, and 100 were nonmembers. See more photos on the RS Facebook page at: <https://www.facebook.com/rensocietysac>



Photo Gallery



Editor 's Comment . . .

by Carolyn Monson

For years I have been a member of the Sacramento Mac User Group called MacNexus. Several of the women meet monthly for lunch or on Zoom and because of that I know this “bat lady” quite well. I thought this YouTube video about what she does was an exceptional learning opportunity!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Un,Ir0fdAV9o>

Friday Forums – Fall 2026

Sept. 4: **Larry Lee**, President and Publisher, The Observer Media Group
The Sacramento Observer – Serving the Community for 64 Years

As President and Publisher of the Observer Media Group, Larry Lee will describe how he is building on the remarkable legacy of his parents, Dr. William H. Lee and Kathryn C. Lee, who founded the Sacramento Observer in 1962. Frequently recognized as the best Black newspaper in the country, the Observer recently launched a newsroom in Stockton and is significantly expanding its online presence in the digital media age. Lee will discuss the importance – and challenges -- of covering underserved communities and will highlight how he has successfully enhanced corporate relationships, developing strong ties with business leaders and the African American community.

Sept. 11: **Steve Swatt, Susie Swatt, Rebecca LaVally**, co-authors
Stories of California's Trailblazing Women on the Unfinished Road to Equality

Three state Capitol-savvy co-authors of *Paving the Way: Women's Struggle for Political Equality in California* will share stories of women, whether well-known or barely known, whose footprints mark the rocky path toward political parity. Meet Emily Pitts Stevens, co-owner of the West's first suffrage newspaper in the 1870s. Or Biddy Mason, who walked most of her 2,000 miles to California behind her master's wagon in 1851 – before winning her freedom in court. Fast-forward to Dianne Feinstein, who in 1990 came closer than any woman ever has to winning the California governorship. Experience the highs and lows of this unfinished journey.

Sept. 18: **Benjy Egel**, Senior Food Editor, ABRIDGED by KVIE
Writing about Food in America's Farm-to-Fork Capital

Benjy Egel will describe his experiences as a food writer in America's farm-to-fork capital, where food is the sustenance and cultural heartbeat of the region's diverse communities. As senior food editor for *Abridged by KVIE*, working with local freelance writers, he brings the best local bites to readers' fingertips while digging beyond the menu to capture economic and cultural trends shaping the food scene. He will describe a region where the hottest local restaurants debut to hour-long waits, immigrants from all over the world create delectable dishes, and farmers' markets swell with the nation's best summer produce.

Sept. 25: **Agustin Arteaga**, PhD, Mort and Marcy Friedman Director and CEO, Crocker Art Museum – *Looking Ahead at the Crocker Art Museum*

For more than 140 years, the Crocker Art Museum has offered extraordinary art experiences to the Sacramento region. The Museum now brings art to life for more than 200,000 members of our community each year. As the Crocker enters yet another new era, join Agustín Arteaga, PhD, the Museum's new Mort and Marcy Friedman Director & CEO, for an inspiring look at what's next for our region's most prominent arts institution. Dr. Arteaga will explore his background in Museum work, and past successes at US and international institutions before diving into some of the upcoming plans for the Crocker.