

President's Message



Deborah Seiler

President

The Renaissance Society
of Sacramento

deborah.seiler2@gmail.com

Renaissance Website:

<https://csus.edu/rensoc>

Key Dates

Friday, Jan. 17

Orientation and Open House

Tuesday, Jan. 21

Program Enrollment begins at 8 am

Monday, Feb. 3

Renaissance classes begin

Monday, Feb. 3

Board of Directors meeting

Friday, Feb. 7

Help Desk near Hinde Auditorium 9:30
am – 12:30 pm

Friday, Feb. 7

First Friday Pizza and Food Pantry
envelopes

Friday, Feb. 7

Deadline for applications for Board of
Directors positions

Friday, Feb. 14

Help Desk near Hinde Auditorium 9:30
am – 12:30 pm

Friday, Feb. 14

Valentine's Day Friday

Monday, Feb. 17

Presidents Day



Hearts Going Out

February is the month we traditionally send hearts to friends and loved ones to share what we may feel year-round but save to express on Valentine's Day.

As I write this, I am thinking that my heart--and surely many of yours--is going out to friends, acquaintances, loved ones, and even perfect strangers who are experiencing trauma.

Many of us have family and friends in Southern California regions devastated by fires. Surely much of the Sac State student body does as well. Regardless of our personal connections, we feel empathy and concern for all affected by the conflagration and misery.

It is once again a time to reflect on gratitude for what we have and remember not to take our fortunes, large or small, for granted.

In Renaissance, we have a committed organization of talented staff, hard-working committee chairs, and dedicated program leaders and tech hosts. Our Spring catalog is bursting with wonderful new and repeating programs that are sure to inform, entertain, and inspire us.

This collective commitment, almost entirely volunteer, is a reminder of the best of ourselves and our Renaissance Society even during trying times.

This might be a good occasion for you to ask yourself if this is the right time to give a bit more of your time, commitment, and devotion to a broader cause that contributes so much to the lives of others.

If so, there are many opportunities detailed in this edition of your *Recorder* newsletter and more to follow in the Weekly Updates you receive by email each Wednesday.

Let's join together and not take for granted the benefits we have or ignore the opportunities to expand them for ourselves and others.

My heart goes out to you.

Deborah

Renaissance Society Scholarship Winners Express Their Gratitude

By Judy Lewis

As spring semester approaches, three of the Renaissance Society's 2024 scholarship recipients have reached out to share how the financial assistance has impacted their journey.



Pham Tong, a first generation college student from Viet Nam, recently completed his first year as a Nursing student. The father of a five-year old son, he reports that “the scholarship had a huge impact on my most busy and most difficult semester in Nursing School at Sac State University. It is not only about financial support that gave me more time dedicated in my studying. It was also an emotional and motivational support that the Renaissance Society believes in my ability. I am very proud of being the winner of the scholarship and being a more confident nursing student.”

He has volunteered extensively in the Cardiovascular Wellness Program, which allowed him to assist older adults with exercise screening and blood pressure monitoring.



Jasmine Asfour describes “growing up in a single-parent household in the city of Stockton, which is infamously known for its high crime rates. My family hails from Palestine, which meant navigating the challenges of adjusting to life in America amidst a language barrier, all while striving to preserve our cultural heritage.”

She reports “The scholarship has been incredibly helpful in supporting my education in Sacrament State’s Doctor of Physical Therapy Program. The program is demanding, and thanks to this scholarship, I’ve been able to concentrate on my studies without the stress of financial concerns. I am on course to graduate the program in the summer of 2026.”



Jackie Chang, the youngest of eight siblings in a Hmong-American family, has noticed that many older family members, such as his grandmother, are afraid of Western medicine. He finds his emphasis in Biomedical Sciences serves him well on his

way to reaching his goal of becoming a neurosurgeon. The scholarship has been instrumental “in covering text books, parking permits, and other school related expenses,” Jackie reports.

Hopeful applicants for the 2025 scholarships are lining up for the possibility of winning one of the seven \$3,000 awards. Renaissance Society members who wish to contribute to this worthy cause can make donations this way:

Make checks payable to The University Foundation at Sacramento State. Indicate Renaissance Scholarships on the check memo line. Return check to the Renaissance Society, Sacramento State, 6000 J Street, Mail Stop 6074, Sacramento, CA. 98519-6074.

Those wishing to make an online contribution can contact the Renaissance office at (916) 758-5133 or email renaissa@csus.edu.



RMD Donations: Help Sac State Students and Save on Your Taxes

By Mike Pidd

Giving all or part of the annual Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) from your IRA to a charitable organization like the Renaissance Society Scholarship Fund benefits students and reduces your tax liability at the same time.

“I have written a check to the Renaissance Scholarship Fund for many years during Give Sac State Day in April, but this year I plan to do a little more by directing a portion of my RMD to this Fund,” said Renaissance member Deborah Seiler. “I am so pleased I can support Sacramento State students and reduce my tax bill at the same time. It is a win-win for all.”

The RMD allocation can be directed to the University Foundation at Sacramento State (EIN # 94-3001359 with designation to the Renaissance Scholarship Fund. Contact your financial advisor or financial institution for the appropriate paperwork.



DONATE



February Forums

Forums are a special category of highly acclaimed, high-profile speakers addressing current topics of special interest to Renaissance members. All Forums occur on Friday afternoons in **Mariposa Hall 1000 from 3 to 4 p.m.** when no other Renaissance seminars, Shared Interest Groups, or presentations are offered.

February 7

BOB CROWLEY: Forlorn Hope: An American West Tale of Survival.



The Forlorn Hope were the 15 members of the Donner Party who set off on snowshoes to try to reach Sutter's Fort, 100 miles away, in the depths of a Sierra winter. Their mission: Alert the world there were families stranded, freezing, and starving to death. Their journey and subsequent story of survival, grit, and determination is a compelling American tale lost in the shadows of history. Bob Crowley is an ultra-distance runner with expertise in American West history, a tech entrepreneur, co-founder, and investor in the Boston-based private equity firm, the Mustang Group

February 14

CATHY MINICUCCI: 250th Anniversary of the American Revolution



Cathy Adams Minicucci has been an active program leader for the Renaissance Society since 2019, focusing on American history. As 2025 is the 250th anniversary of the beginning of the American Revolution, she helped initiate a series, **Topics in the American Revolution**, to examine the early revolution experience of diverse groups: women, native tribes, enslaved people, and members of the militia. She will explore what led to the Revolutionary War, the people who fought on both sides, and the military and political leadership in England and America. Cathy received her BA from UCLA and her Master's degree from Harvard University. For 30 years, she led her own consulting firm Minicucci Associates.

February 21

DONNA APIDONE Isolation: A Tale of Two Generations



Surgeon General Vivek Murthy labeled loneliness and isolation as an epidemic. Although the issue is often associated with people over age 55, it also impacts college and university

students. Learn how communities in the US and around the world are alleviating isolation for these age groups. Donna Apidone is a writer and interviewer with a long history in Sacramento area media. Since leaving CapRadio, Donna has freelanced for PBS KVIE, the Mondavi Center, NextAvenue.org, and Solving Sacramento.

February 28

MARTHA GUERRERO, Mayor of West Sacramento: Public Financing of Sports Stadiums: Its Challenges and Community Benefits.



As West Sacramento is currently in negotiations, no definite financial figures are available, however; Mayor Guerrero will provide a general overview of the financial process involved in public financing of sports stadiums and potential challenges and benefits to the community. Mayor Guerrero received a Bachelor's in Social Work from Cal State LA and a Master's in Social Work from USC. As a Licensed Clinical Social Worker, she has served her colleagues as a member of its National Organization Board and Legislative and Political Affairs groups.



Dining Together January

By Cheryl Nelson

Dining Together will meet at
Mamma Susanna, at

5487 Carlson Dr, (<http://mammamusanna.com>) at
5:30 PM on February 12, 2025.

Dining Together members who wish to attend should RSVP to Cheryl Nelson:
slynnsearch@yahoo.com, no later than February 7, 2025. Parking is available. Separate checks will be



Discover Local Live Music in Sacramento!

By Laurye Brownfield and Dave Harzoff

Do you enjoy live music? The Sacramento area offers a variety of live music venues, from intimate spaces to large concert halls, featuring every genre you can imagine. Last semester, Dave Harzoff and Laurye Brownfield presented a class highlighting four local venues and featuring musicians who have performed in the area. With help from attendees, they also compiled a comprehensive list of local music offerings.

If you missed the class, don't worry—the recording and the curated list are now available for viewing:

- **Recording:** <https://youtu.be/VTffLgXLYbg>
- **Comprehensive List:** [Sacramento Music Class List 2025.pdf](#)

Please note that the list is static, and there are no plans for further updates. However, if someone is interested in maintaining and updating the list, feel free to reach out!



Local Venues Featured in the Recording

The Side Door - Casey Sexton, Talent Booker

Located at 2900 4th Avenue in Sacramento's Curtis Park neighborhood, The Side Door is an intimate listening room seating 100 to 140 guests. A direct descendant of The 5th String Music Shop, (and still offering its music lessons) it became a venue dedicated to live performances. It hosts a wide range of genres, including singer-songwriters, Americana, bluegrass, jazz, and blues. Its relaxed setting and focus on high-quality acoustics have made it a favorite for local music lovers.

The Sofia - Lyndsay Burch, Ex. Artistic Director/CEO

The Sofia Tsakopoulos Center for the Arts, located at 27th and Capitol Ave, opened in 2018 as the permanent home of B Street Theatre. Founded in 1986, B Street Theatre originally toured schools, providing professional theatre for children. Over time, it expanded to include plays for adult audiences. The Sofia offers two modern stages, the Mainstage and the Sutter Theatre for Children, and has become a cultural hub, hosting not only theatre but also live music and community events.

The Torch Club - Maria Texeria, Owner/Operator

Established in 1934 and located at 15th and I Street, the Torch Club is one of Sacramento's oldest live music venues. Known for its rich blues heritage, the club also features rock, jazz, and Americana performances. With its cozy, vintage atmosphere and strong community ties, the Torch Club continues to be a beloved spot for both local and touring musicians.

Twin Lotus Thai - Joe Gilman, Owner/Operator, Educator, Musician

Located at 8345 Folsom Blvd., Twin Lotus Thai blends authentic Thai cuisine with live music. Founded by jazz pianist Joe Gilman and his wife, Kai, in 2022, the restaurant quickly evolved into a music venue featuring trios, quartets, and themed music nights. The success of the live performances led to the creation of "The ANNEX at TLT," next door a space for concerts, art exhibits, and community events.

Featured Local Artists

In addition to venue information, the recording includes performances from local performing artists **Antsy McClain, Dave Bass, Duo Quartet, and Too Many Squirrels.**

Final Thoughts

We hope this brief article inspires you to get out and attend a local live performance at one of the aforementioned clubs or another venue on the list.

This not only offers you a great night of live entertainment but also supports local artists and venues in Sacramento.



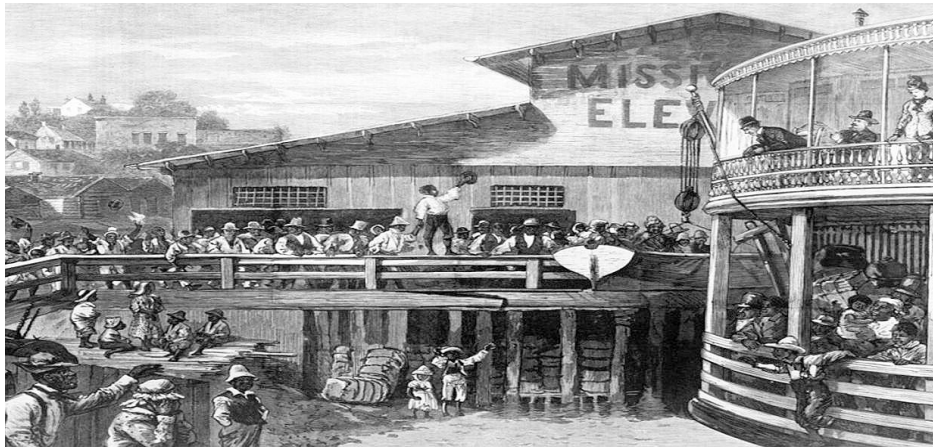
African American Settlements-Cultivating the West

In honor of Black History Month, this article will share a little early African American history.

By Darryl O. Freeman

By 1877, the period of post-Civil War Reconstruction ended and Federal troops were withdrawn from the South. Formerly enslaved in Georgia, Henry Adams and a committee of five hundred African American men petitioned President Hayes and the US Congress to address the abrogation of the newly earned rights and privileges of the formerly enslaved. This petition, along with a proposal for an appropriation of land

for African Americans, was ignored. Adams and his committee organized what became known as the “Exodus of 1879,” an orchestrated migration of African Americans to the State of Kansas. In the first year of the movement, between twenty and forty thousand desperate African Americans made the journey to the state of Kansas and surrounding territories.



African American passengers leaving Vicksburg, Mississippi, in 1879, to escape the oppression of Post-Reconstruction South. Some settled in Kansas while others traveled to Liberia in Africa.

In 1877, the committee formed a company to purchase land some two hundred miles west of Topeka Kansas and created the town of Nicodemus, Kansas, specifically for African Americans. Even though the landscape of Kansas was not the equivalent of the lush green forests of the South, African Americans made Kansas and the surrounding states their new home. By 1880, the town of Nicodemus had over five hundred residents, a bank, hotel, three churches, and several general stores. Over fifty African

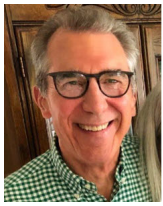
American settlements flourished from the states of Nebraska to Colorado. Most of these settlements were abandoned or later absorbed by larger pioneer towns. Nicodemus has been designated a national heritage site and is the oldest inhabited African American settlement. It remains a symbol of the resiliency and motivation of African Americans to be free and productive citizens in this developing country.



Nicodemus, Kansas: A colony of free African Americans, 1885



In Memoriam



John Albert Caselli. Loving father, friend, music instructor, and Renaissance Society member died on Christmas Eve. Member Mike Agron said this:

“In my initial Sinatra class I first met John, who taught an excellent

Renaissance course on the Beatles. Our shared love of music quickly grew into a warm friendship. We often met for lunch, where he never ceased to amaze me with his remarkable music trivia. “

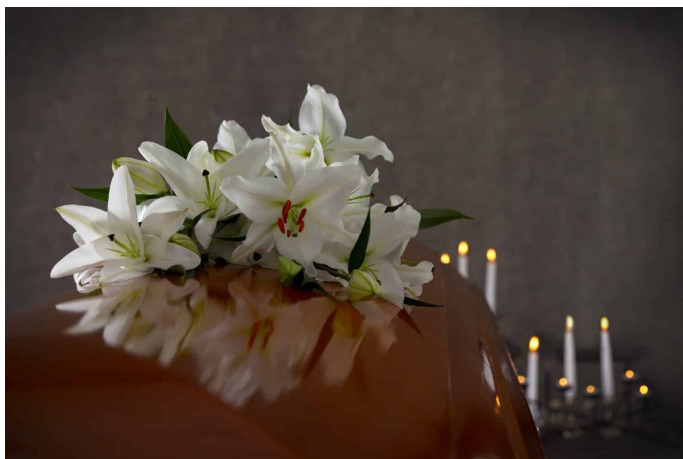


Betty K. Staley. Educator, writer, consultant, world traveler, and Renaissance Society member. She was very prominent in the Waldorf/Anthroposophical environment and she wrote a book, **Tapestries: Weaving Life’s Journey**



Irene Vivian Stone. California State Librarian, docent, loving wife, mother, and Renaissance Society member. Irene passed away Dec. 5 at the age of 104—just two months shy of her 105th birthday.

She is renown for her love of the Cook’s Tour and martinis. Renaissance members remember her participation in water aerobics until the age of 102.



VOLUNTEER HIGHLIGHTS **Jim Hodges, Recorder Editor**

By Deborah Seiler

Yes, it’s Valentine’s Day.

So I hope it’s fitting to acknowledge someone who has made my life as President of Renaissance just a bit easier.

My husband, **Jim Hodges**, took over as editor of this newsletter in April of 2023. Jim was attuned to my stress at the constant turnover among *Recorder* editors and just might have been interested in having me cook dinner more often.

A little history is in order here:

Prior to the pandemic, we had two wonderful editors who produced 10 *Recorder* issues per year — five each on an alternating basis.

Due to the pandemic, the decision was made to add one more edition. And, some felt the newsletter needed a bit of a facelift. So, we added a third editor to the mix to share the burden and add pzazz. Within fairly short order, the existing two editors decided to step away, leaving the added editor to recruit and train others.

The relationships with the new editors did not gel and the styles of writing, layout, and graphics varied widely. The publication did not look good.

Enter Jim. He had laid out my monthly newsletter on elections administration for 11 years, but that was some time ago. Nevertheless, with a steady hand, a firm grasp of Microsoft Publisher, an excellent feel for spacing, and a knack for good graphics, he has given this publication a professional look.

And, he has done it each month without alternating with another editor.

He has produced **21 consecutive issues** and this is his 22nd. He has pledged to do four more, through the June renewal issue before he retires.

THANK YOU, JIM!



2025 Spring Catalog is Now Available

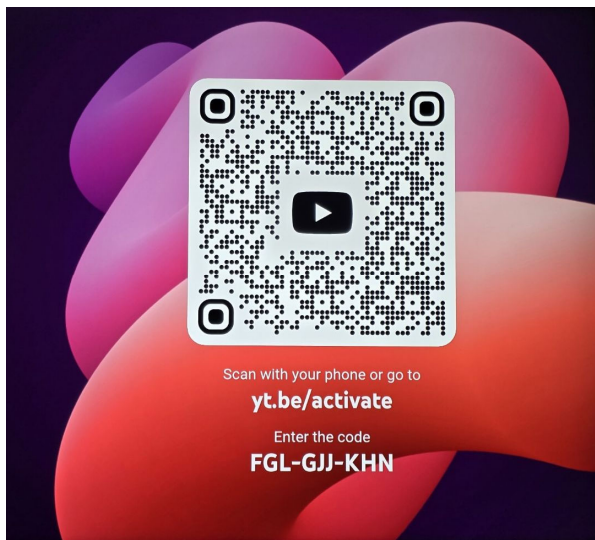
By Peter Mundy and Jackie Lamb

The Program Committee is pleased to announce that our 2025 Spring Catalog is now available on the Renaissance website!

The Spring 2025 Catalog is here! Celebrate with us as we mark our 39th Anniversary as a preeminent adult educational program in California and the United States.

Visit our Renaissance website to find links that allow you to view the catalog online with our flipbook or download to your computer as a PDF. All the details about our programs and speakers are found in the Spring Catalog.

You can get an overview of just program titles and times with the At-a-Glance Program Schedule. Program enrollment starts at **8 am on Tuesday, Jan. 21!**



Submit Your Board Member Applications Now!

By Susan Brackenhoff

It's the start of a new year and the start of a new opportunity! The Renaissance Society offers you a way to become involved in the decision-making process of our beloved organization.

Our Board of Directors is made up of volunteers who give their time and expertise to make this an exciting place to learn, grow and socialize.

Positions on the Board are President, Vice-President, Secretary and Controller. These are one-year terms.

There are three open seats for Member-At -Large positions which have a two-year term.

Applications are being accepted now until February 7 to run for one of the offices or to become a Member-At-Large. Interviews with the candidates will take place in early March and results will be announced in April. The nominating committee submits the slate of candidates to the Executive Committee and the Board for approval and the slate is submitted to the entire membership for ratification.

For more information or to request an application, contact Susan Brackenhoff at susan.brackenhoff@gmail.com or call 217-254-5037.



Spring Semester New Member Party

We are excited to announce that our Spring Semester Social will be held on **Friday, February 21** at the Old Spaghetti Factory, 1255 Watt Ave (Watt/ Arden Way) in Carmichael from 5:00 - 7:30 pm. Longtime members will gather to greet our new members for socializing and fun.

There will be individual ordering from the menu and separate checks; games; music by Frank "Cupid" Martinez; and flowers. In addition, we'll have a house bar for alcoholic purchases.

Please RSVP to Allan Keown: ahkown@gmail.com by February 17.



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March Submissions Due: February 2

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We are now offering **Renaissance Society Logo Wear** items. We have selected two items for pre-order for this semester. Order ASAP! We will batch process our initial order, which will be available in approximately the third week of the Spring semester.

The polo shirt will be available in men's and women's sizes from XS to XXL for \$49.99 each. It is 100% polyester in heather gray with green accents on the side. Our new Renaissance Society logo will be imprinted on the left chest.

The tumblers will be made of aluminum and hold approximately 20 ounces. They will feature our new Renaissance Society logo and a QR code to access our webpage.

Contact Mike Pidd at mikepidd@sbcglobal.net for further instructions and to place your order. We will ask for your size request in men's or women's, along with your payment method. All proceeds will go to our endowment fund.



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