

ARF NOTES

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President's

Message:

Alyce
Akers

Welcome back to the fall semester—at least the **ARF** “fall semester.” We have completed two presentations in our speakers’ series: Jim Allen’s “Riding the Rails” and Tim Karrels’ “CSUN Tropical Biology Program in Ecuador.” Both programs were just plain absorbing! One common factor was that both faculty members involved students in their activities. Two of Karrels’ students co-presented and showed wonderful photos of spiders, bugs, frogs, and student scientists.

On November 4th, Richard Anderson, UCLA Political Science professor and Russia expert, will educate **ARF** members on “Putin’s Russia: What’s Next?” In light of recent developments in Syria, I can’t wait to hear Anderson’s take on Putin.

Barbara Swerkes is your representative to the CSUN Faculty Senate. At our last **ARF** Board meeting Barbara reported that CSUN now has the largest enrollment in the CSU system: 41,800 students this fall. John Broesamle’s book *Suddenly a Giant* comes to mind, doesn’t it. A potential problem, however, is that serious enrollment management and impaction issues may follow such a huge burst in enrollment.

Max Lupul is our talented Webmaster and has recently updated the **ARF** website. Take a look and see the new board roster, the minutes of our last board meeting and other notices. Many

thanks to Max!

Larry Caretto is our membership Database Manager. With over half of the newsletters now being distributed online, the task of keeping up with the different categories of members and mailing preferences is a complex one. Thank you, Larry.

CSUN was well represented at the ERFA October 17th 2015 board meeting. Please see Nancy Owens’ report on page 2 for more details. Chancellor White’s presentation was cordial, relaxed and fact filled. Did you know that 1 out of 20 U.S. college degrees are granted from the CSU (that’s 5% of all U.S. degrees)? Did you know that by the end of the year Chancellor White will have appointed 13 out of 23 CSU presidents? And that he also has appointed virtually a new set of Vice Chancellors? Did you know that the CSU system wide rate of tenured tenure/track faculty is 54-55%, but that in urban campuses the rates can be as low as half of that?

One of Chancellor White’s discussions with ERFA focused on ERFA members’—and thus, **ARF** members’—continued involvement in their campuses. He would like to encourage us to volunteer in our former departments or campuses in any ways we choose. I know that some of

your former colleagues would also like to know what you are doing these days – volunteer work, professional activities, travels, hobbies, and what you do for fun. Write a blurb for the newsletter and email it to me or Ann Perkins, our expert newsletter editor.

See you November 4th!

Alyce Akers

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CSU-ERFA News, reported by Nancy Owens

Alyce Akers, Patrick Nicholson, Barbara Swerkes, and I represented you at the October 17th CSU-ERFA State Council Meeting in Fullerton. Stephen Stepanek attended as CSU Faculty Trustee and Don Cameron continues as Executive Director (more on that later).

The highlight of the day was meeting with CSU Chancellor Timothy White, who appears to be very different from his predecessor. This was his second visit with ERFA leadership. He is a CSU alumnus, having attended Fresno and East Bay. He is interested in establishing partnerships so we have a commitment from him to encourage campus personnel to give official campus retiree groups like **ARF** access to retirees' names and contact information—which we have not been able to get for years. He is working toward achieving a higher percentage of tenure-track faculty (838 searches for next year), telling our story to the governor and legislature, building relationships with advocates and K-12, and leveraging our ability to build and maintain CSU buildings. When it comes to facilitating success on campuses, his attitude is not “No” but, rather, “How can we help you get there?”

Do you have a copy of the retiree's “Survivor's Guide”? If not, it's available from the CSU-ERFA office for \$4.95. If you'd like to apply for a grant (\$5,000 is available), the deadline is Dec. 18th (csu-erfa.org). Information is to be sent with the pocket calendar in November but you might want to get a head start if you have a project that needs a little funding.

CSU Northridge is praised at every meeting for providing an office, etc. for CSU-ERFA (currently in Santa Susana Hall). However, this has limited the number of people who are interested in applying for the Executive Director position. More centrally located campuses are currently short on office space so they can't help us out. The best solution to the problem would be for somebody from CSUN to apply for the position. Don deserves a chance to play more golf, so if you would be willing to consider taking on this part-time responsibility (or know somebody else who would), please let Don know.

The next *Reporter* will include an article on the issue of taxing ‘Cadillac’ health care plans. We were assured that southern California CSU retirees are not affected since our health care plan costs are under the level for this excise tax to apply.

And don't forget to join CSU-ERFA if you haven't yet done so!

REPORTS FROM PREVIOUS PROGRAMS

May Memorial Scholarship Lunch

Forty four members and guests attended the May lunch to enjoy one another's company and hear the presentations by the four **ARF** scholarship winners, who received checks of \$2500 each. The **Hansen/ARF** scholarship winners were also recognized.



Jim Dole and Karen Robinette presenting award to ARF Scholarship winner

October Program

On Wednesday, October 14th, Dr. Tim Karels of the Biology Department and two of his graduate students gave a very interesting presentation on CSUN's Tropical Biology Program and its importance to wildlife and the future of our environment. Dr. Karels shared the structure of the course and his students showed slides of their research while discussing their experiences in the program. Working in the program as undergraduates led them to pursue graduate work in a tropical biology program. The audience was impressed with the level of the two students' research. *Karen Robinette.*

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

November 4th Program

Richard Anderson, UCLA Political Science Professor and Russia expert, will give a talk entitled “Putin's Russia: What's Next?” In light of current developments in both Russia and the middle east, this topic should be of interest to our members—hope to see you there.

January Banquet—Save the Date

We look forward to seeing all **ARF** members at our annual “Thank-God-the-Holidays-Are-Over” Banquet, January 17th, 2016. It is a good way to celebrate the New Year after the holiday stress. We will have another

wonderful evening of good food and entertainment. And don't forget that great Silent Auction. Every year the unique and beautiful items created for the auction are made by the **Needle ARF** group and other **ARF** members and their spouses. Remember that the proceeds from our Silent Auction provide some funds for **ARF** scholarships, in addition to your generous annual donations. This is our first call to get your creative juices flowing and make some items for the auction! Plan to join us and bring your creations. (You don't have to attend the banquet in order to donate items, but we would love to see you there.) Thanks so much for your continued support of our scholarships.

Karen Robinette, Program Chairperson 2015-2016

Celebrate **EMERITI REPORTS** *Your Life!*

Elizabeth Berry (Speech Communication). "I would like to let you all know about a great opportunity at the Los Angeles Public

Library. We are recruiting docents for the Art And Architecture Tour, beginning on Wednesday, January 13th, 2016 for five Wednesdays 10-2. What I like about this activity is that the training and touring are so stimulating, introducing you to LA history and people. After the training, docents are required to tour a minimum of 2 times a month at their convenience. Please give me a call or email me if you have questions and might be interested. Check out the LAPL website for volunteer opportunities.

Phyllis Russell (Engineering). "I volunteer each Income Tax season at the Wilkinson Senior Center in Northridge. AARP (American Association of Retired People) sponsors this event with support from the IRS. We service low-income and moderate-income seniors and are not allowed any kind of compensation. (We do on occasion accept donuts) Each year we are trained by the IRS and have to pass an IRS exam. I've always enjoyed doing my own taxes (go figure), but what I really enjoy is that the people we service are so grateful for us being there. We fill out tax forms both for the federal and state and electronically file them. As an added bonus I keep abreast of any changes that affect my own taxes as a retired person. If you are interested in volunteering, go to the AARP Foundation Website (http://www.aarp.org/money/taxes/aarp_taxaide/) and fill out an application. We train in January, and are open for business from February 1st until April 15th. Most people volunteer one to two days a week during that period of time. There are other AARP sites, at libraries, parks, etc. that may be closer to where you live."

Pat Nichelson (Religious Studies) For several years I have been involved in the San Fernando Valley Interfaith

Council or "VIC." The Northridge Wilkinson Center, where my fellow **ARF** board member Phyllis Russell does invaluable tax-advice work, is one of four large day centers around the Valley that VIC maintains. The centers provide nutrition, recreation, and education to seniors. VIC also organizes smaller dining sites and manages much of the Meals on Wheels services in the San Fernando Valley. I'm currently Vice Chair of the VIC Board of Directors. VIC - - which is celebrating its 50th Anniversary this year - - is organized by people of diverse faiths who promote dialogue and help any seniors in need. Maybe you would be interested in helping out? <http://www.vic-la.org/>

Nancy Owens (FES). "Karen Robinette and I joined other International Textiles and Apparel Association colleagues on a two-week tour of Guatemala last summer. The tour was conducted by Mayan Hands, an organization begun by an American, with the goal of helping Mayan women in Guatemala earn a fair wage for their handcrafts.

We visited several villages to visit with the women and admire (and purchase!) their work. Since most of them speak native languages, their group leader translated into Spanish and our tour leader then translated into English. Conversation took some time and, I suspect, was somewhat abridged in the process. We were asked to tell about ourselves. Mayan Hands brings experts to teach the village women, pays a fair wage to the women whose products pass quality control, and markets the products in the U.S. Because of the Guatemalan civil war and absent husbands, many of the women are the sole support of their families. Mayan Hands also offers some college scholarships for the craftswomen and their children. One constant refrain from the women was how much their lives have improved.

We also visited an elder care center that feeds lunch to 50-60 elderly women who have no other means of support. It is supported by donations and by a shop that sells beadwork (always a shopping opportunity). On the other end of the age spectrum was an elementary school begun by women living in a very poor area of Guatemala City, pre-school first and then a grade added at a time. It is supported by donations as well as by a bakery, a soymilk operation, and a crafts shop. Both of these enterprises had young American women as volunteers.

There are larger-scale textile enterprises in Guatemala. We visited a factory owned by a Ladino (textile workers are all Mayan), which produces ikat fabrics (yarns are resist dyed, then woven to make patterns). The warp was being made on racks on the sidewalk and stretched out for several blocks. A great deal of labor and care goes into being sure the pattern is correct. If you have a navy

and white ikat pillow purchased from Macy's, we saw where it was made.

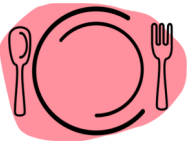
Then there was a rug factory, using looms perhaps 20 feet wide (requiring four men to beat in the filling threads). These were special order, very expensive and gorgeous rugs; "Barak's bedroom" was mentioned, .

Guatemala is beautiful, with lots of curvy roads. As a country girl, I could appreciate the non-mechanized agriculture; there isn't enough flat ground for large-scale machinery. They were in the midst of a hot political campaign, based on candidate signs everywhere. At least we haven't gotten down to writing political slogans on large rocks by the side of the road, have we? And I found out I'm a jaguar.

IN MEMORIAM

Shane Frehlich (Kinesiology) passed away on September 4th, 2015. Shane was the CSUN Faculty President and Kinesiology Chair until his illness required him to take leave. I had the privilege, as many of you have of working with Shane before I retired. We will miss his warm, positive presence. He is survived by his wife Diane, sons Max, Miles (both age 3) and Jonas (11 months), his parents, sister, friends and colleagues. A memorial service was held for Shane on Friday, October 30th, 2015 at the Valley Performing Arts Center at CSUN. *Alyce Akers.*

INTEREST GROUPS



SCCARF REPORTS

As sunset descended after an unusual rainy July weekend, 25 SCCARFers enjoyed a spectacular view of the San Fernando Valley from the hilltop Odyssey Restaurant, as the Tuscan like colors faded into the dark night. One attendee called the setting "serene... quiet enough for real conversations," which were so good that the last revelers didn't leave until after 10 pm. Another concurred, noting that, "The food was good, but the company even better." Most who attended felt that the "staff were efficient, friendly, and accommodating." But not all agreed, for one found "service to be uneven." Many deemed the food to be excellent, suggesting that the new chef has won some converts. One agreed that some dishes were quite good, but others were quite ordinary. The Prix Fixe dinner—a choice of several salads, five entrees and three delicious desserts—was a winner; it was, said one, "economical with good choices." The starter Odyssey sampler (prime rib tacos, calamari, grilled artichoke, mango habanero shrimp) was called "a great entrée." The house salad also came in for praise: "I'd come

back just for that salad and its killer dressing!" As the evening wore on the non-diabetics among us enjoyed scrumptious desserts and all helped Ken Jones celebrate his birthday with a sincere, though not particularly tuneful, rendition of "Happy Birthday." As the evening's host, I found the staff to be cordial and responsive. If you haven't been to the *Odyssey* recently, give it a try, preferably at sunset and at an outside table, where you can enjoy both the cuisine and the view. *Bonnie Faherty, with help from several fellow SCCARFers.*

SCCARF's August food fest was held at *Aroha*, a recent New Zealand-based addition to Westlake Village's culinary scene. The new Kiwi eatery received kudos for its gastronomic creations: The "pork rack was tender and savory"; "Salmon was 'melt-in-your-mouth' delicious"; "Venison was especially good...not gamey or dry"; "The cherry tomato and baby mozzarella salad with basil proved to be an entrée!" One who savored "pavlova," New Zealand's national dessert, could only mutter, "Oh, my, oh, my!". There were a few mixed opinions: The lamb loin entrée was excellent, said one, the lamb "... was good, but not great," said another. "Service was A+," one opined; "Staff was a bit overwhelmed," thought another. The "flavor of veggies melded well with the pork," commented one; the "Brussels sprouts side dish was not to my liking," commented another. Clearly, the food and service did not please everyone who attended, but the ambience and the evening's company received high praise: "A lovely So-Cal evening on the patio"; "Beautiful evening, very nice people"; "Nice setting ... no loud music." One summed the evening thusly: "As always with a SCCARF dinner: Good food, good company, good conversation." *Jim Dole*

The September SCCARF dinner was held on the 15th at an elegant, old-style American steak house in Simi Valley, Sutter's Mill. It's a great dining place with a full bar where you can get Manhattans up or on-the-rocks, Margaritas of myriad varieties, and where the beer and wine seem just right. Today's Sutter's is a descendent of the original at the corner of Sepulveda Boulevard and San Fernando Mission Road in our own San Fernando Valley. Those who could not join us missed an opportunity for excellent dining while the nineteen wise members who shared this unique culinary experience went away fat and happy. But not to worry; the consensus was that we'll be back. A sampling of comments from those in attendance indicated that the steaks were prepared as requested; the ribs cooked to order; and the scallops sauteed as expected. We enjoyed a room to ourselves and after finishing our meals visited until we were done. We appreciate the generosity of the attendees, for the collection was sufficient to cover meal and bar costs, a generous tip and still there was \$50.00 left over that was dropped into the ARF Scholarship Fund. *(Bob Kiddoo)*



BOOK GROUPS

Tuesday Book Group

Our group welcomes new members. We meet on the third Tuesday of each month (1:30 PM) in the home of a different member to read a

wide range of fiction and non-fiction, as is indicated by the reports of our group's readings in ARF Notes. Usually about seven or eight members attend our discussions. Everyone has an opportunity to suggest titles for upcoming months, our discussions are stimulating, and toward the end we have coffee and desert supplied by the host. Contact the leader, Robbie Shaffer <robbieschaffer9@gmail.com>, for further details.

The following report covers titles discussed this past spring and summer.

Billy Budd, by Herman Melville. Billy, a Christ-like innocent on board ship, publicly kills a man who has falsely accused him of conspiracy to mutiny. Billy is caught in the conflict between the love of his mates and the demands of maintaining order. The language of the novel is difficult, complex and beautiful. The ideas are important and have been the inspiration for law school debates and a vast amount of critical analysis. Again we liked the novel.

Madame Bovary, by Gustave Flaubert. After Emma married Dr. Bovary for his status, she finds life in their small French town is simply too dull. She yearns for riches and passionate love and captures these to some extent, though in the end she does not succeed in finding her happiness. Madame Bovary is not someone we would like to know and care for, but other characters are more faithful and have more modest strivings that compensate in part for Emma's deficiencies.

Far from the Madding Crowd, by Thomas Hardy. Set in rural England in the nineteenth century, this beautifully drawn novel follows the life of an attractive young woman (Bathsheba Everdene) as she learns to manage the farm she inherited. Over the next years she deals with various obstacles and is pursued by three men, each very different in style. It's a good story and a pleasure to read – no wonder it has recently been made into a movie for the second time.

The Sound of Things Falling, by Juan Gabriel Vasquez. Most of us enjoyed this novel set in Colombia, mostly in the 1970s, when that country was being corrupted by its involvement in the illicit drug trade. The story has a range of characters whose relationships seem not to last for long, but all are entwined into a complex story. The author's writing is grounded in the unpredictable reality of coping with daily life's difficulties, deliberately contrasted by Vasquez with the magical realism of his fellow Colombian Gabriel Garcia Marquez.

The Bluest Eye was the first novel written by Toni Morrison, who won the Nobel prize for fiction for the body of her work. It is the story of Pecola Breedlove, a poor black girl who believes she is ugly following white standards of beauty. The texture of black life in a small Southern town is revealed through brilliant, affecting writing. One of our members read out loud a long description of "nice" black girls with details of grooming, house-keeping and church going, yet who are careful all their lives to avoid any "funkiness". This flows into the description of a woman who is a controlling, alienated, and emotionally absent wife

and mother. Complex narratives made it difficult to keep track of the characters, but the overall sense of the characters' feelings and lives was clear. This is not an uplifting book but more an account of both the gravity and poetry of black lives in the South.

Infidel, by Ayaan Hirsi Ali. The powerful autobiographical book details the life of a girl growing up in a Muslim home of Somali parents in Somalia, Saudi Arabia, and Kenya. The emphasis in her family was on obedience, especially to her father, with frequent beatings designed to force compliance to the father's dictates and to the rules of the Quran. To avoid an arranged marriage to a person whom Ayaan had never met, she was able through intricate maneuvers to flee to the Netherlands and became officially a refugee.

Living in the Netherlands, in several cities in the region of Holland, was a revelation. There she found for the first time that the Western values of individual freedom and the non-violent expression of opinions were not just accepted but highly valued and practiced. Hirsi Ali became a translator and a member of Parliament. Although she wanted to remain a good Muslim, she found that the West's cultural values, especially in the treatment of women, were so superior to those of Islam that she ultimately stopped believing in the ways of Islam and in God. Now a citizen of the U.S. and the Netherlands, she teaches at Harvard University and is affiliated with the American Enterprise Institute and Stanford's Hoover Institution.

Our group struggled with the traditional "liberal" value of treating all cultures with equal respect. In this book, female circumcision and honor killings of women are the most powerful issues that forced us to question our non-judgmental perspective. There is also a major question in the Netherlands: Should Muslims be encouraged with government support to maintain their culture separately in schools and mosques when this has led to their being less integrated into Dutch society? *Jim Allen and Joel Zeitlin.*

ARF Science Book Group

In August we discussed Chris Stringer's *Lone Survivors: How We Came to be the Only Humans on Earth*. Overall, the book was both interesting and rich in detail and we would recommend it to others. After consideration of alternatives, the author does conclude indeed that Homo sapiens originated in Africa. Their spread and ultimate displacement of other species was assisted by favorable genetic changes. One change facilitated peaceful interaction between groups, enhancing the prospects for survival. Adam pointed out that an even more detailed analysis of that change can be found in Bernard Chapais: *Primeval Kinship: How Pair-Bonding Gave Birth to Human Society*. The role of collaboration is also discussed in the August issue of *Scientific American* in an article by Curtis Marean, "The Most Invasive Species of All." The vast geographic and temporal scope of Homo sapiens expansion and displacement of other homo species is impressive as is the evolution of the brain over time. *Bill Hosek*

On September 16th, 2015 we discussed *The Upright Thinkers: The Human Journey from Living in Trees to Understanding the Cosmos* by Leonard Mlodinow (2015). Mlodinow traces the development of scientific thinking from the earliest agrarian societies of the Middle East to Quantum Mechanics in a book that is written in a very accessible and entertaining style even for those of us who still cringe at the mention of quantum mechanics. The author focuses on the development of thinking from a purely mechanical (counting produce and determination of property) to the qualitative emphasis of the great Greek thinkers who attempted to discern theological cause and effect relationships. He briefly discusses that theoretical scientific thinking was kept alive and further developed by the Arabs, while European scientific thinking during the Roman period was purely utilitarian (great aqueducts!) until the Enlightenment period brought about a new approach to scientific thought. Theoretical thinking abandoned the qualitative emphasis and developed along purely quantitative lines. *Heidemarie Lundblad*.

We selected the following books to read for the next three meetings:

October 21st: *The Gluten Lie: and other myths about what you eat*, by Alan Levinovitz, Available in Hardcover, Kindle, Audio (various versions)

On **November 18th** we will discuss *The Wright Brothers* by David McCullough. Available in Hardcover; paperback; kindle; audio; CD; audiobook. In this thrilling book, master historian David McCullough draws on the immense riches of the Wright Papers, including private diaries, notebooks, scrapbooks, and more than a thousand letters from private family correspondence to tell the human side of the Wright Brothers' story.

On **December 16th** our book will be *Risk Savvy: How to Make Good Decisions* by Gerd Gigerenzer (4/14.) Available in hardcover, paperback and kindle. An eye-opening look at the ways we misjudge risk every day and a guide to making better decisions with our money, health, and personal lives.

We will continue to meet in the Oviatt Library 3rd floor conference room from 1:30 to 3 pm.

The Monday Book Group will next meet on November 2nd at 1:30 pm at Iris Shah's house to discuss *Mrs. Lincoln's Rival: A Novel* by Jennifer Chiaverini. For December 2nd the book will be *Dead Wake: The Last Crossing of the Lusitania* by Erik Larson.

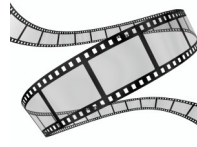


BIRDING GROUP

We will meet at Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve on Sunday, November 22nd at 9:30 am. Allow one and a half hours driving time. We will bird in the morning, then have lunch at a nearby restaurant. After lunch we may do more birding or perhaps go to the Visitors Cen-

ter. We should be ready to head home by mid-afternoon.

I am sending this notice to those of you who have expressed recent interest in our group. If you know of others who would like to join us, please invite them. For those of you who have not been to Bolsa Chica Reserve, it is located in Huntington Beach on the inland side of PCH, across from the Bolsa Chica State Beach. Check Google for additional information including photos, maps, history, and a bird list. *Linda Jones*.



FILM GROUPS

Members of the **Monday Film Group** gathered at the home of Bob Hanna on October 19th to discuss *Pawn Sacrifice*, the story of chess maven Bobby Fischer, and *The Martian*, which depicts an astronaut's efforts to survive after being stranded on Mars. *Pawn Sacrifice* wasn't well received either by movie critics or moviegoers and vanished from the theaters so quickly that only 3 of the Club's members were able to see it. All 3 had mixed reactions, ranging from an appreciation of Fischer's skill to boredom. The movie had a lot of red herrings, and all 3 agreed that at two hours long it desperately needed the hand of a good editor, especially during the first hour, when Fischer is clearly shown as developing mental issues. The scenes portraying his deteriorating state of mind were simply repetitious rather than edifying. The acting was cited as the the film's best feature. Tobey Maguire is excellent as Fischer, as is Liev Schrieber, who played Spassky. The cinematography was also noteworthy. The ratings provided by the 3 members who saw the film resulted in an average of 7.

Everyone loved *The Martian*! Most thought the plot was believable in its depiction of the astronaut Watney (Matt Damon) stranded on Mars when his ship and crewmates take off thinking he has been killed. The discussion of this movie was particularly enthralling because two of the Group's members are engineers and one is a botanist. The engineers explained the science--which scenes worked well and which ones didn't, and the botanist said the steps Watney went through to produce water and enrich the Martian soil were credible and convincing. Most believed the science was persuasive, as Watney struggles to survive on the inhospitable planet. The consensus was that the film ought to be shown in classrooms, seeing it as a superb ad for space exploration. There were mixed reactions to the disco music that blared throughout the film, but both the visual and special effects were described as spectacular, not surprising given the hundreds of names responsible for creating them that appeared in the credits at the end of the film. Members gave this film a high 8.9 rating--and a 10 to the two engineers and the botanist in the group. Dorena Knepper

Twelve members of the **Monday Film Group** gathered at the home of Abe and Vickie Feinberg on September 21st to discuss *Mission Impossible: Rogue Nation*, and *Grandma*--two very different films. *Mission Impossible: Rogue Nation* was enjoyed by 9 members, who highlighted the stunts as exciting,

and praised the acting of Rebecca Ferguson as the London secret agent and foil to Tom Cruise, who plays the American secret agent, Ethan Hunt. Members thought Ferguson's character was much more interesting and compelling than Cruise's, but most thought her character was ill-defined, since it wasn't until the very end that one knew if she was an agent, a double agent, or a triple agent. Alec Baldwin as the pompous Washington bureaucrat was also praised for his acting. The 3 members who did not particularly enjoy the film cited problems with the plot as being too difficult to follow at times, with too many repetitive scenes. A motorcycle chase in Morocco was mentioned by some as interminable, resulting in frequent checks of their watches. Several thought that the theme--evil never wins--was conveyed in a satisfying way; others saw it as ordinary and predictable. Everyone agreed that the cinematography was gorgeous--the sweeping views of Vienna in particular. The message the film sent out with respect to elected officials and bloviating bureaucrats was sobering. In this movie, all could be bought and none had any moral character. Members gave this film an 8 rating.

Grandma was thought to be the more substantive of the 2 films. Several members thought Lily Tomlin was a commanding presence on the screen, and none of the members could think of any other actress who could have played the role as effectively. The movie is short--just 79 minutes--and on the surface, the story is simple enough: Tomlin's character, Elle, is a lesbian grandmother who recently lost the love of her life after 38 years together, when she is unexpectedly visited by her granddaughter, Sage (Julia Garner), who has become pregnant and is hoping to borrow \$630 from her grandmother to pay for an abortion. Because Elle has used all of her savings to pay off the medical bills resulting from her former partner's illness and has cut up all of her credit cards, she does not have the money to loan. A road trip ensues, where Elle and Sage set off visiting various characters from whom to borrow the sum they need. Although abortion is the catalyst for the story, the theme of the film is the importance of relationships and the choices we make in our lives. In addition to Tomlin's stellar performance, members also thought Julia Garner and Sam Elliot, in a brief but key role as Tomlin's ex-husband, were outstanding. Members also liked the fact that the plot was not predictable, and that information about the characters was not revealed all at once. The script was also praised, as the dialogue between and among the characters was fresh and believable. Members gave this film a high 8.6 rating. Dorena Knepper

Eleven members of the **Monday Film Group** met at the home of Diane and David Schwartz on August 17th to discuss two quite different films, *Jurassic World* and *Mr. Holmes*. The group classified the first film as a Sci-Fi adventure having outstanding special effects, with the balance "junk." It was viewed by some as the most exciting of the four Jurassic movies and found to be totally engrossing and fun.

Several members referred to its theme of DNA manipulation as exaggerated since one can get pieces of DNA, but not long chains from fossils. The plot was seen as secondary to the graphics. Chris Pratt portrayed Owen Grady in this film, and Bryce Dallas Howard (daughter of Ron Howard) as Claire Dearing was good, but her running in high heels was seen as not credible. The actual location of Kauai (for the supposed Island off Costa Rica) was beautiful and the animated aerial shots of dinosaur movement were spectacular. The film had grossed \$638 million in its two months of release, showing that its graphics overcame the weaknesses in plot. The group gave this film a rating of 7.7 despite one member's claim that it lacked intellectual content.

Mr. Holmes provided quite a contrast, with the group describing it as a mystery drama with an underlying theme of coping with the aging process. The scenes alternating between Ian McKellen playing Holmes at age 76 and 93 were masterfully acted. Another in the cast cited for fine acting was the young boy Roger played by Milo Parker. Laura Linney as Holmes's dullard housekeeper was viewed as weak, with her imperfect accent a handicap. The strong relationship between Holmes and Roger was superbly shown, with far more emotion here than in earlier Holmes movies. The location of the English countryside was beautiful, but the sudden view of the White Cliffs of Dover was extraneous. The plot of Holmes trying to solve his last case is slowly revealed to be unnecessary due to his weakening memory. Thus, we have not a mystery but a gradual recovery of lost memory. With McKellan's powerful performance holding the pieces together, the film provides strong insights into the relation between aging and memory loss. The group gave the film a high rating of 8.5. Dorena Knepper

The **Tuesday Movie Group** met at the home of Elizabeth Schneider to discuss *Phoenix*, a period piece set in Berlin just after WWII, featuring a Jewish returnee from one of the prison camps. Her face is so disfigured she is not recognized by her former husband. He sees enough resemblance that he tries to pass her off as his former wife and claim a fortune. She learns he not only betrayed her but obtained a divorce. The story unfolds with a great many unexplained or very brief incidents, leaving the audience with only bits of information to try to understand the message of the film, but the overall judgment was to give the film a high numerical rating of 8.3. Helen Giedt

The **Tuesday Group** met again at the home of Joyce Linden to discuss *The Intern*. The movie was well liked by all and we gave it a high rating. Robert de Niro was believable as a retired man tired of filling his days with pleasant but not rewarding activities. Accepted as a senior intern he slowly earns the affection and respect of the younger employees and interns by his pleasant and unobtrusive manner and willingness to help. Occasional bits of humor kept the tone light and demonstrated that generational differences with respect to dress, attitudes, and knowledge of electronic devices could be surmounted. Helen Giedt.

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