

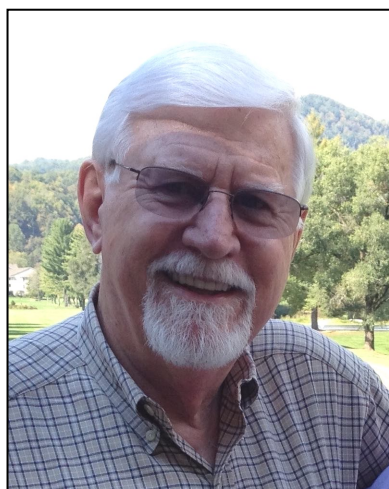
# ARF NOTES

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**President's  
Message:  
Ron McIntyre**

Welcome to the 31<sup>st</sup> year of **ARF** events and activities. **ARF** has become one of the largest and most active campus retired faculty organizations in the CSU – thanks to all who've made it possible!

Last year's Program Committee, chaired by Karen Robinette, has put together an especially interesting and timely Wednesday Afternoon Speakers Series for this year. Fall speakers will be Elyce Wakerman, Professor emeritus of English, on Immigration and the Refugee Crisis (September 14th); Robin Abcarian of the *Los Angeles Times* on topics she will chose (October 19th); and former CSUN Religious Studies professor Amir Hussain, now at LMU, on Muslims in America (November 9th). If you've not been attending the speakers series, I assure you that you would find the presentations interesting and rewarding. They're at the Orange Grove Bistro and many of us come early and have lunch with other **ARF** members prior to the 2:00 program. The complete program schedule, including our regular annual events, is on page 2.

Hats off to our outgoing **ARF** Board members, especially President Alyce Akers for the outstanding leadership she patiently, cheerfully, and most effectively provided. The **ARF** Board does most of its work behind the scenes, not only making sure the organization runs smoothly but also advocating on behalf of

retired CSUN faculty.

As a recent example, the Board learned last spring that the Faculty Senate was considering changes to the Emeritus Rights and Privileges section of the CSUN *Administrative Manual*. (We're fortunate that **ARF** has a seat on the Senate, currently held by Barbara Swerkes.) The Board examined the proposed changes and found several of them problematic. For example, one would have placed limits on emeritus faculty access to library resources; another would have made unclear the kind and extent of emeritus faculty's access to University technology resources. Several members of the Board met with the Personnel Planning and Review Committee, voiced **ARF**'s concerns, and suggested revisions in the proposed changes. The result was a complete success for **ARF**'s proposals and for emeritus faculty! The revised proposal from PP&R reaffirms that emeritus faculty "are continuing members of the academic community and, to the extent that University resources permit, continue to enjoy all the rights and perquisites of members of the faculty that are allowed by University and State regulations." When the proposal receives final approval by the Senate in September *ARF Notes* will publish the complete statement of emeritus rights and privileges. I look forward to working with all of you and with the

new **ARF** board whose members and their phone numbers are included on the back pages of *ARF Notes*. I hope you'll enjoy the opportunities **ARF** provides you, including participation in one or more of the **ARF** interest groups. And please give us your ideas for future programs, new interest groups, and any ways that the organization can be improved.

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**ARF Program Schedule 2016-2017**  
(All days Wednesday unless otherwise noted.)

<u>Date</u>	<u>Speaker/Event</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Location &amp; Time</u>
September 14, 2016	Elyce Wakerman, English (emeritus)	Immigration and the Refugee Crisis	2 pm, Northridge Room – Orange Grove Bistro
October 19, 2016	Robin Abcarian, Los Angeles <i>Times</i>	Topic to be Determined	2 pm, Lamb's Lounge – Orange Grove Bistro
November 9, 2016	Amir Hussain, Theological Studies, Loyola Marymount	Muslims in America	2 pm, Northridge Room – Orange Grove Bistro
December	No meeting or program		
January 14, 2017 (Saturday)	Annual Thank God the Holidays are Over Banquet	Entertainment TBD	Orange Grove Bistro No-host bar 6 pm Dinner 6:45 pm
February 8, 2017	Heidemarie Lundblad, Accounting & Information Systems (emeritus)	Ombudsmen for Assisted Living Facilities	2 pm, Northridge Room – Orange Grove Bistro
March 8, 2017	James Allen and Eugene Turner, Geography (emeriti)	New Research on the Demographics of Los Angeles	2 pm, Northridge Room – Orange Grove Bistro
April 6, 2017 (Thursday)	Field Trip	Nethercutt Museum, Sylmar	Time and transportation to be announced
May 13, 2017 (Saturday)	Annual Spring Memorial Luncheon	ARF Memorial Graduate Projects Award Recipients	Orange Grove Bistro 12–2 pm
June 3, 2017 (Saturday)	Picnic/General Meeting/Election of Officers		Location TBD Noon



## NEWS FROM CSUN

### CONSTITUTION DAY

Please join us on September 17<sup>th</sup> at 8:30 am at the University Club/Orange Grove Bistro for an annual program celebrating Constitution Day. This year we will examine the Constitutional precedents for confirmation proceedings for federal appointees. Our speakers will discuss how this process has evolved over the decades. Panelists are Dr. James Sefton, CSUN, and Dr. John Evans, Univ. of Wisconsin, Eau Claire. There is no cost for the program, but RSVPs are required by Wednesday, Sept. 14<sup>th</sup>. Email [melaine.pemberton@csun.edu](mailto:melaine.pemberton@csun.edu) or call 818 677-7131.

### DEAN SEARCH

CSUN Provost Yi Li writes, "I would like to apprise you of the outcome of the recent Search and Screen for Dean, Mike Curb College of Arts, Media, and Communication. An admirable search was conducted, followed by additional steps in the process, but in the end the search was not fruitful. Consequently, we will begin a new dean search in the Fall semester. In the meantime, Dr. Daniel Hosken has graciously agreed to continue serving as the Interim Dean until a new dean has been hired."

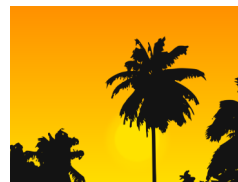
### SEASON-AL GARDENING CLASS

On Saturday, September 24th, 9 - 11 am Sandy Masuo, succulent enthusiast and writer, will conduct a class on "Splendid Succulents: the inside dirt on growing fat plants." Following the lecture, Sandy will demonstrate how to design and assemble an eye-catching succulent container. Attendees are welcome to bring a small (8" or less in diameter) container to class, ready to be filled with potting medium and succulent cuttings. This part of the class will take place outdoors in the Botanic Garden, so be prepared for hands-on activity in sunny/hot weather. In order to gauge the quantity of soil and cuttings needed, when you register for the class, please indicate whether you will participate in this hands-on portion. Registration for the free class begins Wednesday, August 24th, and is required. E-mail [botanicgarden@csun.edu](mailto:botanicgarden@csun.edu) to request a space or for more information. Parking instructions and the class meeting location will be sent upon registration.

### ARF MEMORIAL AWARDS LUNCHEON

The ARF Memorial awards luncheon on May 14th was well attended and each student presentation was very inter-

esting. One of the winning research projects was presented jointly by two students, and the review committee felt that both students had contributed equally to the research, so they each received an award of \$1500. Thanks to the anonymous donor who covered the \$1000 that had not been budgeted. The awards committee decided to change the designation from "Scholarship Awards" to "Memorial Awards" so that recipients won't be penalized when applying for or receiving other awards, as it is the practice to subtract monies received from other scholarships that may be given by the institution. *Karen Robinette.*



### IN MEMORIAM

**Mel Lifson (Civil Engineering and Applied Mechanics).** We received word from Mel's daughter that he passed away in May.

**Jennifer Romack (Kinesiology)** passed away on April 24th 2016. She loved and enjoyed life with family while making many scholarly contributions. She applied Benjamin Franklin's quote to her professional activities: "Tell me and I will forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I will learn." In recognition for her extraordinary record of contribution to the learning experience of her students and to her field of study, Jennifer received a CSUN outstanding faculty award in 2014 and a CSUN Visionary Community Service-Learning Award in 2006 for her efforts in service-learning. A memorial service was held in May. The family has asked that donations be made in Jennifer's name to: The Arbor Day Foundation: [www.arborday.org/](http://www.arborday.org/)

**Amy Denissen (Sociology)** passed away on May 1, 2016 after a six-year journey with ovarian cancer. Amy joined the Sociology faculty at CSUN in 2006 and was an active member of the CSUN community, serving on many University committees and as a member of the University Faculty Senate. As a public sociologist, Amy did research in the areas of Gender, Sexuality, Work, Labor, and Organizations. Her research on women in the building trades (electricians, surveyors, carpenters, and metal workers) highlighted the ongoing discrimination that women face in this male dominated field. Amy was a CFA activist, and in 2011 she carried out a study for the UCLA Civil Rights Project on the impact the budget crisis had on faculty and students at CSUN. Amy was a beloved teacher and mentor who worked closely with

undergraduate students in the Work & Society option within the sociology major. Amy was an engaged colleague who could be depended on to complete any task. She strongly believed in public higher education and the opportunities it provides for a diverse student body. Her dedication and devotion to her students, colleagues, friends, and the broader community will be sorely missed but not forgotten. An academic award named in her honor will be given out each year at the Sociology Department's annual honors dinner.



## EMERITI ACTIVITIES

**Rodolfo Acuña Chicana/o Studies** received the prestigious John Hope Franklin Award on March 14<sup>th</sup> from *Diverse Issues in Higher Education* magazine.

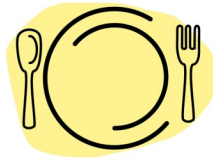
**Bonnie Faherty (Nursing)** and her husband Ed Feldman every year join other advocates from UCLA to carry a message to elected officials and decision makers. This year, the journey was to support Pell Grants (and other financial aid) for college students. In recent years, they have sponsored nursing students to go on this trip and learn the tools and strategies of advocacy.

Despite rain and drizzle, they managed to get in some fun too. When the tour busses were too full, they took cabs to the Lincoln Memorial and walked around viewing the Vietnam Wall, the Women's/Nurses Memorial, the Korean War memorial, the Martin Luther King memorial and wound up at the Jefferson Memorial by 10 pm for a grand personal "moonlight tour of the monuments of DC."

After an early briefing in the Capitol Visitors' Center, the group went to the White House for a meeting with staff of the First Lady about programs to assist retention of students toward a degree. The First Lady has a campaign called Reach Higher Initiative <https://www.whitehouse.gov/reach-higher>. Her staff and UCLA personnel shared ideas and strategies to assure that students are successful in college. After meetings with members of Congress, a reception for members and staff was held in the Congressional Meeting room in the Capitol Visitors' Center.

Everyone was up early the next day for breakfast with Senator Diane Feinstein. During these breakfasts, Sen. Feinstein asks questions of the young people about the constitution and our traditions such as the flag. Two UCLA students each won a coin for correctly answering the Senator's questions. Then it was off to meetings

again until it was time to fly back to Los Angeles.



## SCCARF REPORTS

In April, 27 SCCARFers met at *XOC* (pronounced "shock") *Tequila Grill* to enjoy an evening in this upscale Mexican restaurant in The Village, a new outdoor mall at Westfield Topanga. As it was a beautiful spring evening, the group dined in the outdoor patio portion of the restaurant. Together with the more typical entrees, the menu included many dishes with unusual ingredients and culinary twists, all attractively presented and greatly enjoyed. *XOC* is one of several new restaurants within The Village, which has a different vibe from most malls in the area, accentuated by a lively outdoor walking corridor. For most of SCCARFers in attendance, this was the first visit to *XOC*, but also to The Village, and many expressed pleasant surprise at the ease of accessing the restaurant and the parking. Clearly, the mall, and especially its many new restaurants yet to be explored, is great new addition to our corner of the planet. (*Roberta Mauksch*)

May found 23 members of SCCARF at *Malbec's* in Toluca Lake enjoying authentic Argentinean cuisine. Ensnared apart from other clients in an enclosed patio, the group enjoyed excellent service. Most members were pleased with their dishes: "...loved the Sorrentino stuffed pasta's delicate flavor"; "...salmon tapenade was delicious... vegetables perfectly cooked"; "...sea bass and sausage platter with sweetbreads were excellent"; "...skirt steak with chimichurri sauce and roasted vegetable was cooked to perfection"; "vegetarian platter...four different tasty dishes...What a treat!"; "Affagato (vanilla ice cream topped with whipped cream with espresso on side) was perfect finish!" But some found an occasional item to be subpar: for example the rice, and the chewy texture of the Churasco (butcher's cut beef). Yet all, I think, would agree with the attendees who rhapsodized about the "incredible dinner company with our fellow SCCARF friends" and the "beautiful setting" in which we enjoyed the camaraderie." (*Jim Dole*)

Even those who aren't crazy about Chinese food had a great culinary experience at *Chi's Chinese Cuisine*, SCCARF's June venue. The multipage menu had delicious morsels for every one of the 26 folks who attended, and many on special diets appreciated the low salt content of the dishes and the emphasis on fresh, healthy food. "The wait staff was excellent" and our very helpful



host, Marco, went out of his way to accommodate our requests and set up for the event. Many attendees found the dim sum particularly enticing, and the mango/walnut salad received accolades from others. One found the garlic chicken a bit lacking in “garlicy-ness,” but Marco helpfully acknowledged that he “can fix that!”. All felt the warm welcome of this commodious, newly remodeled and beautifully appointed restaurant just a stone’s throw from campus. As usual, all who joined this culinary experience enjoyed the camaraderie and conversation, though for some the noise level proved a bit high, making conversation a challenge. (*Bonnie Faherty and Ed Feldman*)

Twenty-six SCCARFer's enjoyed an evening in "Paris" at *La Frite Cafe* down on the Boulevard in Sherman Oaks on Bastille Day Eve. *La Frite* has been bringing the feel of a Paris street-side cafe to the Valley for over 40 years, and our evening on the Boulevard was like a walk down memory lane for several of us. *Moules Au Dijon* (Mussels and Frites) proved to be a popular choice and was definitely reminiscent of sitting down for light summer supper in Paris. However, *La Frite* also served up delicious burger options, including the house special "La Frite Burger." Prices were reasonable and valet parking at \$3.50 was a steal. A good time was had by all. Sorry if you missed it. (*Tim Fox and Phyllis Russell*)



## BOOK GROUPS

The **Science Book Group** met in Oviatt Library on June 15<sup>th</sup> to discuss *The Violinist's Thumb* by Sam Kean. We had a lively discussion even though the fire alarm forced us to relocate to a table at the coffee shop. Kean addresses serious issues related to DNA and genetics enlivened by amusing vignettes such as Paganini (he of the violinist's thumb!). Sandy Jewett obviously understands the technical material better than some of us and helped by explaining some of the issues addressed by Kean.

The group met again on July 20th to discuss *Blink* by Malcom Gladwell. The title and early chapters discuss how some people are able to make instantaneous decisions/judgements “in the blink of an eye” and miraculously are correct. For example, the art expert who immediately knew that the Getty kouros was fake, or the tennis commentator who invariably can correctly call a double fault. Later the author makes it clear that it is not some magic or inborn talent but many years of training that make this possible. We agreed that the book was well written and easy to read. Nevertheless it contains interesting and thought provoking material; the sections on unconscious prejudices and behavior in crisis situations appeared especially appropriate, given some of the recent shooting incidents. Gladwell in this context provides interesting information on research that shows that many of the shootings that have occurred in recent

months could have been avoided with better training.

The following book was discussed at the August 17<sup>th</sup> meeting: *Rise of the Rocket Girls: The Women Who Propelled Us, from Missiles to the Moon to Mars*, by Nathalia Holt. The next meeting will be on September 21st. *Heidemarie Lundblad*

In April the **Tuesday Book Group** read one of the great novels of Italy, *The Leopard*, by Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa. The book describes the life of Don Fabrizio Corbera, a nobleman in Sicily in the 19th century as Sicily is changing from aristocratic rule to part of a more populist united Italy. As Garibaldi, the leader of the rebels, advances we see Tancredo, Don Fabrizio's nephew and the lone dynamic member of the extended family, leave to join the rebels. Although the old ways do not completely die, the new mayor, Don Calogero, is now an “uncultured” local whose newly acquired wealth has come to surpass that of Don Fabrizio. Of course, marriage between Tancredo and the beautiful daughter of Don Calogero is convenient and irresistible.

The writing is both grandiloquent and perceptive, describing the elaborate appetites, sumptuous living and sympathetic musings of the aging Don Fabrizio as well as clever clerics and religious spinsters. The author himself was a nobleman who never published in his own lifetime. A publisher once told him “this book is unpublishable.” We enjoyed the book and decided to continue in the Sicilian vein, choosing as our next book, *On Persephone's Island*, about more modern life on the island. Coincidentally, that book's author is also fascinated by the loss and persistence of old customs.

*On Persephone's Island* is an account of an American woman's life in Sicily. In the early 1960s Mary Taylor graduated from Radcliffe College and went to Sicily, where she planned to work for a year. But she fell in love with and married a Sicilian, Tonino Simeti, and had lived there for 20 years and had two children by the time she wrote this memoir. Although the family had a home in Palermo, it was their farm in the countryside and its seasonal changes that most captivated the author. Ms. Simeti also found much to interest her in history as for over two thousand years the island has been a crossroads of traders, invaders, and settlers, including Greeks, Arabs, and Normans.

Mrs. Simeti visits ancient ruins and local religious festivals, the latter accompanied by elaborate food rituals. She works in her garden, describes the family's olive making, and wonders about her relations with her neighbors and Tonino's family. She reflects on the difficulties of living as a foreigner, the still strong influences of old customs and beliefs, her concerns about the world her children will grow up in, and the continuing presence of the Mafia. This book is more informative and less cuddly than *A Year in Provence*. One of our book group members with a strong love of the island prepared a wonderful Sicilian dinner for us all, and now we're ready to visit it ourselves.

John Updike's main character in *Rabbit, Run* is Harry Angstrom, known as Rabbit. The story is set in the 1950s in a couple of small cities outside Philadelphia. Rabbit is tall and

good looking. He was a star basketball player in high school, but those days of acclaim are gone. He now works demonstrating a kitchen gadget called MagiPeel. His wife Janice is only interested in booze, cigarettes and TV. One night when Rabbit comes home to his drunken wife with their son being watched at his parents' house, he argues and leaves, telling her he will pick up the child. In fact, he runs away without word to his wife or family, as he does several times. In this disturbing book, Rabbit acts, but without regard to consequences.

Updike has created a man who is deeply flawed but understandable and part of America. Updike was an art student as well as a writer and his eye for the sparkling visual detail or smart characterization is pleasing. As well, there are long interior passages of characters seeing the landscape, the town and the life of small town America. In an echo of the author's life, Rabbit is fascinated by women's sexuality in an exaggerated but recognizable way--he is clumsily aggressive and yet his desire is sometimes innocent and endearing to the women in his life.

After completing this novel, John Updike wrote three more that follow Rabbit through the later stages of his life. These offer us some hope that Rabbit's life might not remain as dismal as it is in this first novel. We will probably read another of these in the near future and invite any interested readers to join us. *Jim Allen and Joel Zeitlin*

The **Wednesday Book Group** met on August 3<sup>rd</sup> at Chris Smith's house to discuss *Alexander Hamilton* by Ron Chernow. The first half of the book - approximately 33 chapters - was discussed at this meeting, and the remainder will be discussed at the September meeting. *Chris Smith*



## FILM GROUPS

The **ARF Tuesday Film Group** met in May at Jeanne Glasser's home to discuss *Eye in the Sky*, directed by Gavin Hood. Everyone present said that the film was worth seeing and gave it an 8.86 out of 10. Helen Mirren and Alan Rickman were the main actors in the film, which was dedicated to Alan Rickman. See the **Monday Film Group** section for a review of this film.

The **Tuesday Movie Group** selected *Finding Dory* as one of the choices for the month of July. The directors, Andrew Stanton and Angus MacLane, also wrote the script. The cast included Ellen DeGeneres as Dory, Albert Brooks as Martin, Hayden Rolence as Nemo, Ed O'Neill as Hank, Kaitlin Olson as Destiny, and Ty Burrell as Bailey. All the voices were believable: Dory, the harbor seals, the giant squid, the birds, and Destiny. The themes of the movie focused on family ties with true love in Dory's family. In addition, understanding Dory's disability of forgetfulness was threaded throughout the plot. Dory gets separated from her parents and searches the ocean for them. She even begins to forget what she is looking for! In fact, Dory's constant whining repetition of, "I can't remem-

ber. Can you help me?" was somewhat bothersome.

The story is action packed with escape antics and slapstick. It is a feast for the eyes in the animation of the story through color and the settings in the ocean. Seven of the members saw the movie and gave the movie a 7.2/10. It is interesting to note that *Finding Dory* is now a free movie on streaming sites. I recommend this highly enjoyable movie to moviegoers of all ages. *Christine Smith*

Nine members of the **Monday Film Group** met on April 18th at the home of Joyce Linden to discuss two films. *Eye in the Sky* was judged to be a powerful film that explores ethical issues in modern warfare, where drones and other new technologies replace more traditional forms of combat. The plot involves three notorious Al Shabab militants, among them a British woman that Lt. Colonel Katherine Powell (Helen Mirren) has been pursuing for years, who are hiding out in a house in Nairobi, Kenya, planning a suicide bombing. American military officials are involved in the plan to destroy the house by using an armed drone that will kill the terrorists and destroy the house along with a swath of land surrounding it. An ethical dilemma that causes anguish and leads to indecision is whether to strike the house and consider a little girl collateral damage, or delay it until she can be enticed away and risk losing the opportunity to take out the terrorists, who will choose a crowded location and detonate themselves. A central focus of the film is on the decision-making concept of "referring up." Several members thought the best scenes in the movie were those showing the group of various government bureaucrats sitting around a boardroom table, any one of whom could make the decision, but who instead each look desperately for ways to deflect that responsibility as if they were playing a game of "hot potato."

The acting in the film was given very high praise-- especially Helen Mirren, the UK-based military officer who has to deal with all of the indecisive bureaucrats. In addition to the acting, members also praised the direction and the script which offered a minimum of dialogue and a high level of suspense. Members rated this film at a solid 9.

The second film, *Hello, My Name is Doris*, elicited a wide range of responses from members, some who judged it to be an average film, and several others who expected more from Sally Field. Some thought the movie moved too slowly, while others thought Field's character, a quirky woman who has become a hoarder after years spent caring for her dominating mother, progressed too quickly from arrested development to self-awareness. Given the intense focus on ethics in the other film, one member was bothered by the dishonest Facebook description that Field created to attract a man. After Field's mother dies, Field moves through a range of emotions, culminating in dissatisfaction with the state of affairs in her life--a mess that closely resembles the chaos of her home, which is filled with clutter and disorder.

Field's character fantasizes a lot, a plot device that was liked by some but not others. Not one member found these scenes comical, while another thought they were silly. Field's love interest, a man much younger than she, enjoys her company but

is not romantically interested in her. When Field sees him in a store kissing a young woman, she realizes the truth and is devastated by it. However, the incident is what spurs her to boldly make changes in her life--clearing out her house, quitting her job, appreciating the value of her close friends, and getting on with establishing her independence. On the plus side, members praised the music, and the colorful clothing Field wore which both reflected and enhanced her unconventional personality. Ratings ranged from a low of 5 to a high of 8, producing an overall average of 7.2.

Ten members of the **Monday Film Group** met on May 16<sup>th</sup> at the home of Abe and Vickie Feinberg. We first discussed *Jungle Book*, and although a few members had a preconceived bias against Disney films, all thoroughly enjoyed the film. The comment, "greatly exceeded my expectations" was repeated by several members, who were won over by the technical achievement of combining a human actor, Neel Sethi, as the young boy, Mowgli, with CGI-created animals that seemed as human as the child and not the anthropomorphic creatures most were anticipating. Members agreed that the theme of the movie--through teamwork and cooperation, you can triumph over any adversity--was delivered without sounding preachy. A sub-theme, the interdependence of humans and animals with their environment, was also thought to be skillfully conveyed. The integration of all of the elements (music, animation, acting, cinematography) was described as masterful. It was the stellar cast who provided the voices of the animals, among them Bill Murray, Lupita Nyong'o, Idris Elba, Scarlett Johansson, and Christopher Walken, that garnered the most praise from club members. This film received one of the highest ratings ever awarded by the Monday Group: 9.4

*The Meddler* received a much wider range of reactions from members, with some viewing this "dramedy" as flawed, with scenes that were not believable, and others who enjoyed the film for the opportunity to see Susan Sarandon perform. Her character, Marnie, is a New Yorker whose husband has died, leaving her financially well-off for the rest of her life, but also with a tremendous void. Because time has stalled, she tells people her husband died just a year ago. It isn't until the end of the movie that we and she realize he's been dead for two years. The need to be needed is a powerful emotion, and it leads Marnie to uproot to Los Angeles where her daughter Lori, a busy Hollywood screenwriter, lives. Marnie tries to make herself useful by giving her daughter unwanted advice, all of which Lori ignores. This pushback only leads Marnie to broaden her reach, and she soon begins inserting herself into the lives of her daughter's friends, buying them expensive gifts. Members disagreed with each other on several points: some thought the theme of this movie, coping with the loss of a loved one, was well-handled, but others thought the meddling was too exaggerated. Members did agree on one point: they would not recommend it to others. Individual ratings ranged from 5 to 9, resulting in an average of 7.4.

The **Monday Film Group** met again on June 20<sup>th</sup> to discuss two films. *Love and Friendship* was very much enjoyed by members, receiving high praise for the costuming, the cinematography, and the acting. Of particular note was Kate Beckinsale as Lady Susan Vernon, a nearly penniless widow, who is scheming, manipulative,

and mean-spirited, with a singular ambition to find husbands for herself and her daughter. Tom Bennett was also lauded for his role as Sir James Martin, a total blockhead and fool, with whom Lady Susan ends up (he is the man she had intended for her daughter, who in a supreme irony, ends up marrying the man her mother had intended for herself). This play of manners and polite society is quintessential Jane Austen, on whose novella, *Lady Susan*, the movie is based. Two members who said they didn't care much for period dramas both enjoyed this movie, citing especially the humor and the wonderful music. Members ranked this film at 8.0.

The second film, *The Lobster*, was by contrast thoroughly detested by all members. Although several critics described this film as a comedy, many members saw it more as a horror film. The bizarre plot portrays a society that is totally lacking in emotion and feeling. The movie begins in a hotel, where single people come in search of a mate. They are given 45 days in which to find one, and if they don't, they will be transformed into the animal they have designated upon their arrival. David (Colin Farrell), the main character in the movie, has chosen to become a lobster because among other reasons, he's always enjoyed the ocean, loves to swim, and feels that as a lobster he would be less vulnerable to predators. Other grotesque and eccentric plot turns and devices ensue, and several members of the club said they would have left the theater had they not been obligated to see this movie. Members criticized the plot as difficult to follow, let alone understand, and found several of the grim, violent scenes difficult to watch. Colin Farrell's performance was praised by some as the only redeeming feature. The members' rating 2.4 rating of this film is the lowest the club has ever awarded.

In August, the **Monday Film Group** discussed *Finding Dory*. See the **Tuesday Group's** review of this film on the previous page. The group also discussed *Central Intelligence*, which was seen as unexceptional, although several members enjoyed some of the humor. The two main characters, Bob and Calvin, trace their friendship back to high school, when Bob is pushed naked onto a basketball court by a bully. Calvin, who is popular, smart and good-looking, gives Bob his letterman's jacket to cover himself--a gesture of kindness that Bob never forgets. Twenty years later, Bob is a CIA agent with rippling muscles, while Calvin has become a mild-mannered accountant. Their 20-year high school reunion is coming up, but first we see these two become involved in a spy caper, involving chases, endless fist fights and awful accidents. Most of the members thought the script was incoherent and the editing poor, which only exacerbated the problems with the plot. One member commented that the movie did illustrate an important instructional value: we don't always realize how events impact us, citing Calvin's humane act of offering his jacket to Bob, and the friendship that subsequently developed. Members gave this movie an overall 5.9 rating. *All Monday Film Group reviews submitted by Dorena Knepper.*

## ARF EXECUTIVE BOARD, 2016—2017

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### ARF NOTES

**ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED FACULTY**

**CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE**

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