

ARF NOTES

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**President's
Message: Pat
Nichelson**

As we come to the end of 2017, your Executive Board Members and I wish you a grand 2018. May you and yours experience health, happiness and peace. No doubt groups like **ARF** aim to promote those three benefits, mainly through fellowship. The leading noun in our title, *'association,'* comes to us directly from a word in Latin (*'socius'*) that means 'friend, ally, companion.' From *'socius'* (or *'socia,'* feminine) we ultimately get sociology, society, social, and so on. An association (Latin *'associatio'*) is a "friending" phenomenon. *'Ad-socium,'* "toward the friend." Throw in the ending *'-tio,'* and it becomes a verbal form: an active moving toward the friend. Al Baca, our **ARF** colleague – I call him the dean emeritus of Classical Studies at CSUN -- could expand greatly on this. He might even want to add that 'compassion' (from Latin "to feel **with,**" or "suffer **with**") doesn't exist without association. Compassion depends on our first associating with someone or something. The Northridge Association of Retired Faculty exists to promote a companionship of friends and allies among university retirees. But here we struggle against a paradox. "Retire" comes directly from the French, with an echo from Latin. "Retire" derives from a compound that means "to throw out, or throw back." Yes, even "to throw away." I remember when Gramma would retire her worn out shoes. Words do have root meanings that cling for real reasons.

We might say that **ARF** swims against the etymological undertow of "retire." Hence, let me urge you to ask

colleagues to join **ARF** and, of course, our affiliate CSU-ERFA which is our chief advocate with the CSU Trustees, CalPERS and the Legislature. Through its members' newsletter ERFA also is an important source of information – and advocacy -- on retiree benefits. Also, please be active in your **CSUN-ARF's** varied forms of association: SCCARF dinners, the **ARF** Speaker Series, and **ARF** interest groups from Films and Books to Wrestling and Canasta (well, we are open to new ideas)! Likewise join us on our bussed and guided tours, for instance, on Wednesday, April 11th -- with transportation from CSUN -- we will visit the Gene Autry Museum of the American West for lunch and a tour. **And, this is a big one:** our annual "Thank God the Holidays Are Over Banquet" will be held Saturday, January 13th at the Orange Grove Bistro. See the announcement for this event that is included in these *ARF Notes* and contact Ron McIntyre. Also keep an eye out for our upcoming lectures: Fake News and Humanitarian Service. Our current times make these subjects more pressing than ever. The great Twentieth Century Jewish thinker and essayist Martin Buber -- the philosopher of human dialogue -- wrote in 1958, "All real living is a meeting." Do come to the meeting!

This Fall some of our colleagues have suffered serious personal losses. The association extends our condolences.

Several members have suffered from severe winds and fires; some have directly lost property; many have felt the vicarious pain of their friends and neighbors having lost their homes. To these colleagues we offer sorrow and admiration for their courage. Finally, many thanks to Ann Perkins, our *ARF Notes* editor, for her fine and generous work!

Patrick Nichelson

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NEWS FROM CSUN AND THE CSU

Manzanita Hall Wing Dedicated

On September 15th, a wing of CSUN's Manzanita Hall, home to the school's acclaimed Department of Cinema and Television Arts (CTVA), was dedicated in honor of the Hollywood Foreign Press Association (HFPA).

The dedication is in recognition of a \$2 million grant the association gave CSUN's CTVA department in January 2016 to support students, including the creation of a HFPA Scholars program, and to enhance technology. President Harrison said, "We are exceptionally appreciative of the support and generosity that HFPA has shown CSUN over the years. Their support is a big reason why our film program is ranked among the best in the world. For more than 20 years, the association's commitment to empowering the filmmakers of tomorrow has borne fruit at CSUN. The association exposes global audiences to new voices, and its annual grant to our senior film projects reflects its dedication to expanding opportunities for diverse perspectives to be heard."

Harry Gamboa Exhibit at Autry Museum

One night in 1991, after having dinner with friends, Harry Gamboa Jr. got into his 1966 Volkswagen Beetle, turned on the radio and heard an announcement: "Be on the lookout for a Chicano male. He is dangerous."

Gamboa, a photographer, essayist, performance artist and lecturer of Chicana/o Studies at California State University, Northridge, still reflects on that moment. "I immediately thought, 'Wow ... this kind of broadcast puts all the Chicano males I know in danger — my father, my brothers, my uncles, my son, myself, all my colleagues and my friends,'" he said.

The moment sparked a question for Gamboa: What is the psychology behind a negative stereotype? To combat the negative stereotype of men of Mexican descent, Gamboa began to photograph Chicano males he knew personally or professionally for an ongoing series titled "Chicano Male Unbonded." The series has garnered international acclaim, most recently from The Autry Museum of the American West, which mounted the first comprehensive exhibition of "Chicano Male Unbonded," currently running through August 2018.

Alumna Receives Teacher of the Year Honor

Erin Oxhorn-Gilpin '05 (Liberal Studies, Multiple Subject Teaching Credential) started working with children when she was 14. Today, she's a first- and second-grade teacher (she teaches a "split class," where two age groups are combined) at Northlake Hills Elementary School in Castaic, north of Los Angeles. This October, state officials named her as one of California's 2018 Teachers of the Year.

In 2002, she transferred to California State University, Northridge from Moorpark College and joined the Integrated Teacher Education Program (ITEP), which allowed her to graduate with a bachelor's degree and teaching credential.

ITEP is designed for students who want to pursue a career in elementary education or special education. The program offers subject matter courses leading to a degree in liberal studies, combined with field experience in teaching. Students learn from in-classroom observations and get to apply their teaching skills in a classroom environment.

She's joining an elite group of five former teachers of the year from our college," said Shari Tarver-Behring, interim dean of CSUN's Michael D. Eisner College of Education. Out of the five teachers nominated for the state honor, Oxhorn-Gilpin is the only elementary school teacher. She loves working with younger students, and she likes to see their achievements and development into stronger readers and writers, Oxhorn-Gilpin said.

"It's a gift that I get to work with children, and watch them grow as people and academically as students," she said.

CSUN Ranks High in Technology Education

When Rafael Munoz recalls his time at the Layer 8 Computer Security Club at California State University, Northridge, he feels proud and thankful. In March, Layer 8 won the Western Regional Collegiate Cyber Defense Competition, defeating seven other schools — including Stanford, Berkeley and Cal Poly Pomona.

"CSUN was the central hub for all that happening," he said. "The school opened my eyes to what I wanted to do and gave me the opportunity to try new things."

Munoz's CSUN experience is just one example of the tech talent developed at the University, leading Bixel Exchange to rank CSUN among the top 10 schools producing tech talent in the Los Angeles area. In its inaugural ranking in mid-November, Bixel's Sector Report on the Information Technology (IT) Industry named CSUN No. 2 for bachelor's degrees and No. 3 for master's degrees.

REPORTS FROM PREVIOUS PROGRAMS



Sandy Banks, November 8th

ARF members and their friends filled the Northridge Room at the Orange Grove Bistro Wednesday, November 8th, to have a conversation with **Sandy Banks**. The subject was “*Navigating a New World in Challenging Times.*” A Senior Fellow with the USC Annenberg Center on Communication Leadership and Policy, Banks has spent 36 years in various roles as an award-winning journalist and an editor with the *Los Angeles Times*. She is best known for twice-weekly columns offering her personal take on issues and forces that both unite and divide us. She has taught journalism courses at USC and CSUN and provided commentary on social, cultural, and political issues for PBS, CNN, and the BBC. She lives in Northridge and is the mother of three adult daughters, including a CSUN graduate who is now a special education teacher in Van Nuys. The famous Sandy Banks is a CSUN friend and neighbor.

For this gathering of retired and semi-retired professionals, the internationally eminent Banks, speaking without script, personalized her fraught subject. She put herself on the line as being as puzzled as her colleagues in the room by the brittleness of public communication in the present moment. She disclosed her own constant effort to correspond in writing - - as well as in person at the grocery line - - in a respectful, honest manner in spite of an increasingly Orwellian atmosphere. She shared several memories about the moral guidelines that traditional journalists struggle to live up to. She also noted changes in the groundwork of journalism that are wrought by new technologies. She eloquently described the fragility of Plain Old Truth in our current atmosphere. But most remarkably, with optimism and hope, she addressed the moral and psychological wear and tear of being a citizen, a caring adult, a parent and good neighbor in this slippery, fractious ‘*New World.*’ Needless to say, Sandy Banks held the group’s attention! She certainly elicited interesting questions and comments from the audience. This was another strong **ARF** Presentation. Sandy Banks made news *personal!*

Dan Blake and Pat Nichelson.

UPCOMING PROGRAM

See **page 7** for information and a reservation form for our annual January Banquet!



IN MEMORIAM

Margaret (Peggy) Steiner (Administration) died on October 30th. Peggy had a very long and distinguished career with the University. Over the course of her career she served as Director of Academic Budget Management for Academic Affairs, and a MAR for the College of Science and Math as well as the College of Health and Human Development. Peggy was a key administrator supporting CSUN’s Ventura Extension Campus before it became CSU Channel Islands and worked on grant projects for The University Corporation. She served as a retired annuitant at PPM for several years and among many other contributions oversaw the creation and maintenance of the PPM library; the development of the PPM Stretching Program in coordination with the Department of Kinesiology; and was a founding member of the CSUN Vintners Club. Peggy will be remembered for her charming personality, welcoming smile and her “Perfectly” positive attitude. She was a joy to all who knew her. *Mary Hanson.*

INTEREST GROUPS

We always welcome new members to our varied interest groups. It’s a great way to connect and get to know your former colleagues in a new setting. Reports from most of these groups appear in this newsletter, but from time to time we publish a consolidated list so you can browse and see what might interest you. Email contacts are given so you can get more information (e.g. time, date, place, focus).

Golf Group: dcameron@csun.edu

Monday Film Group: dms@csun.edu

Wednesday Book Group: jallen@csun.edu

Science Book Group: heidemarie.lundblad@csun.edu

Social Cuisine Club of ARF (SCCARF):
jim.dole@csun.edu

NeedleArf: sandra.jewett@csun.edu



FILM GROUP REPORT

The **Monday Film Group** met on October 23rd, 2017 at the home of David and Diane Schwartz. Refreshments were kindly provided by Thomas Potter. The Club had chosen the films *American Assassin* and *Battle of the Sexes* for discussion this month.

American Assassin follows the main character, Mitch Rapp, in the aftermath of the death his girlfriend in a terrorist attack. Rapp is played by Dylan O'Brien, who does an excellent job and carries almost every scene of the film. Of note was the part of a CIA instructor played by the always fun to watch Michael Keaton. Although the occasional "thriller violence" was present it was, at least, not over the top. All-in-all this was a fairly standard adventure/spy film. It held adequate interest for all the club members so that, at least, none of us left early or spent much time looking at our watches! The club gave it an overall rating of 6.1 out of 10. One club member thought it was quite bad but most of us just considered it average.

Battle of the Sexes centers on the famous 1973 tennis match between two champion players. Billie Jean King who is in her prime is well played by Emma Stone and Bobby Riggs who is well past his prime and a bit of a hustler, is played by the outstanding comic Steve Carell. Carell's over the top male chauvinist character was funny while still maintaining some sense of sympathy for this unusual individual. The background story describing the struggle for women's equality in any endeavor, and in particular sports, was very well portrayed. The story of Billie Jean coming to terms as a lesbian in a time of intolerance was treated with great sensitivity. All the club members really liked this film and gave it a relatively high rating of 8.7 out of 10. *David Schwartz*

The **Monday Film Group** met again on November 13th, 2017 at the home of Home of Vicki Feinberg. The Club had chosen the films *Jane* and *The Meyerowitz Stories* for discussion this month. *Jane* follows the main events of the life of Jane Goodall and centers on her famous work observing chimpanzees in Africa. The film utilizes recently re-discovered excellent footage that was shot by Ms. Goodall's cameraman and husband Hugo van Lawick. The film traces the work of this untrained researcher as she develops from an initially naïve individual to a serious and realistic scientist. As the film progresses the view of the subject chimps as gentle shy creatures morphs to show that, as in much of nature, they can become extremely aggressive and even war-like. This documentary kept all of the club members in their seats and all of us took some serious lessons about the realities of

nature away from it. The club gave *Jane* a very high overall rating of 9.4 out of 10.

The Meyerowitz Stories centers on the events surrounding the current day to day interaction of the children of a dysfunctional family with each other and their domineering artist/professor father. Harold, the father, is played by Dustin Hoffman. Harold continually talks over others and never seems to hear anything anyone else says. Although Dustin Hoffman does his usual good acting job, the actual character was seen by our members as being somewhat over the top and as a result none of us developed any real empathy for him. The children, played by Adam Sandler, Elizabeth Marvel and Ben Stiller, acted well but, as with the father, the club members felt that they developed little empathy for any of these three characters. The club members really did not like this film and gave it a relatively low rating of 5.9 out of 10. *David Schwartz*

On December 11th, the Group met at the home of Jeanne Glazer. We had chosen the films *Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri* and *Lady Bird* for discussion this month.

Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri depicts what happens when the main character, Mildred, places ads on three billboards questioning why the local police chief, Bill, has made no progress in solving the murder of her daughter a few months earlier. Mildred is played by Frances McDormand and her performance was nothing less than fabulous. McDormand created a conflicted, angry, guilt-ridden character that even being almost "off the wall" is totally believable. The police chief was played by Woody Harrelson who has matured far from his light-weight role as bartender in "Cheers" to become one of the finest male actors of the current time. The remaining supporting cast formed a powerful ensemble and we felt that Sam Rockwell, as a police officer, did an excellent job. Our members agreed that this black comedy, was very good with the only hesitance being that some of the later scenes seemed unnecessarily extreme. The club members gave this film a rating of 9.3 out of 10.

Lady Bird centers on interactions between Christine "Lady Bird," a strong-willed senior in high school, and her family in Sacramento, CA. The relationship depicted most strongly is that of Lady Bird's interaction with her equally strong-willed mother, Marion. Lady Bird was played by Saoirse Ronan who created a totally believable oppositional adolescent. Marion was played by Laurie Metcalf. Both actresses did an exceptional job and the remaining cast worked to create a well-integrated ensemble. Of note were the characters of a priest played by

Stephen Henderson and a nun played by Lois Smith. Some of our members did not like the role of Lady Bird's father. This role was well played by Tracy Letts but the role itself depicted a character that was so weak as to be unrealistic. Additionally, our members questioned why the relationship between Lady Bird's brother, who was of a different ethnic background, and the family was never explained. Even with these few flaws our members gave this film a rating of 9.1 out of 10.

For the month of January, the Group plans to view and then discuss the two films: *Call Me by Your Name* and *Darkest Hour*. David Schwartz.



BOOK GROUPS

After learning of Churchill's exploits in South Africa, **The Wednesday Book Group** jumped to India, reading Arundhati Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness: A Novel*. Roy has been active in human rights and environmental causes; and unsurprisingly, she has set her characters in the context of political struggles, poverty, treatment of lower castes, and tensions and violence between religious groups in modern Indian urban society. The story begins with Anjum, a Muslim hermaphrodite who leaves her strained home and joins a group of other hermaphrodites. After her own odyssey she welcomes fellow outcasts and others living on the margins of society to a makeshift but steadily improved shelter at the corner of a Muslim cemetery in Delhi. The residents weave together lives that provide elements of happiness in the midst of this overwhelming country.

A second part of the book centers around a middle-class young woman, Tilo, and her friends from school, an unknowingly compromised journalist, a diplomat-spy and a revolutionary. This part of the novel describes the political struggles in Kashmir, as that region's mostly Muslim population tries to overcome its control by Hindu India. This includes the most disturbing sections of the book, involving details of oppression, torture, and killing as the Indian police and army seek to squelch rebellions.

The book is a long, sprawling, and seemingly disjointed work full of characters and subplots and time shifts that make it difficult to follow, especially for people not familiar with India. We were frustrated by the unfamiliar names of the too-numerous characters and

too-brief introductions of them. While many members of our group were more confused than captivated, we reviewers and a few others thought Roy's acute observations and powerful, lyrical writing made this book very rewarding.

Our September reading was *Bel Canto*, a 2001 novel by Ann Patchett, which begins just before a private concert in Lima, Peru, by the American soprano Roxanne Coss. (The story is modeled partly on an actual incident where members of the Túpac Amaru Revolutionary Movement took over an embassy in Peru.) Because the president of the country, whom the revolutionaries had planned to take hostage, was not present and the guerrillas had no back-up plan, they simply remained in the vice-president's home and kept most of the concert's guests as hostages. Over the next months we see how the captives -- Miss Coss, a Japanese industrialist named Mr. Hosokawa, his translator, and others -- and the very young guerrillas, two of whom turn out to be young women in disguise, come to love and build their days around Miss Coss's morning routine of singing operatic arias. As the rules made by the generals become a bit less rigid, relationships develop between hostages and between certain soldiers and hostages. All these slowly unfolding characters and developments are at the heart of this entrancing novel.

Most people liked the book a lot, rating it a five out of five, but a few people rated it four because they saw the characters as too optimistic and romanticized to be believable. This book was made into an opera, which was performed in Chicago about 2015. If it comes to L.A., we all would like to see it.

Our next book was Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*. This is a major work by a highly regarded author—winner of many prizes and considered the father of the post-colonial Indian novel.

Midnight's Children is the life story of Saleem Sinai, recounted in the first and third person. Saleem was born on the stroke of midnight of August 15th, 1947, the hour when the partition of British India into India and Pakistan became effective. He is an omniscient narrator. He knows other characters' thoughts thanks to telepathic powers. His special power allows him to spy on his parents and anybody else he is interested in and to communicate with the other children born on this historic moment, who have their own magical powers. His story parallels the modern history of India up to 1981.

Most members of the group did not like the book, and only a few of us finished it. Everyone agreed that Rushdie is a genius with words, but the story and

characters were very difficult to follow. In fact, there are so many characters, some with name changes, that Wikipedia has a dedicated page titled Characters of *Midnight's Children* to help the reader. *Joel Zeitlin and Jim Allen*

On November 15th the **Science Book Group** discussed *The Hidden Life of Trees* by Peter Wohlleben (What they Feel, How they Communicate - Discoveries from a Secret World). The book is easy to read and contains quite a bit of information about the interaction of trees in a natural forest as opposed to a plantation forest. Wohlleben has a tendency to anthropomorphize and some members of the group were less than impressed with the notion of trees having and expressing feelings for their companions. But who knows? Wohlleben may be correct that a natural forest with only the most minimal interference by humans will be the healthiest and happiest forest possibly. However, it must be remembered that only by turning the forest in Huemmel (Wohlleben's town in Germany) into a "remembrance forest" was it possible to (a) maintain a "natural" forest and (b) turn it into a commercial asset. The forest in question is used as a repository for cremated remains (in biodegradable urns). The interment fees provide a quite lucrative income for the town. It should be noted that in Germany when one has a loved one's remains cremated, the urn is NOT handed to the relative but to an internment professional. Urns must be buried either in a regular cemetery or a specially designated "remembrance area", usually a forest.

The link below takes you to an English translation of a webpage that provides a good discussion of Peter Wohlleben's forest: <http://franzjosefadrian.com/naturwaldzellen/rheinland-pfalz/huemmel/6/>

The next meeting was on Wednesday December 13th to discuss *The Genius of Birds* by Jennifer Ackerman. A report will appear in the next newsletter. On January 17th we will discuss *The Vital Question: Energy, Evolution, and the Origins of Complex Life (2015)* by Nick Lane. It is available in hardcover, paperback, kindle, audiobooks, etc. Note: You may want to start early with this one. It takes a bit of time. The February meeting will be on the 21st - watch for announcements.

Until a change is announced, all future meetings will take place at Linda's house at 1:30 pm. Thank you Linda!!!



SCCARF REPORT

An intrepid and convivial group of gastronomes gathered at *Kobee Factory and Syrian Kitchen* in Van Nuys in November. Although Kobee Factory's décor may be spare, its food is scrumptious. Comments from those present suggest that Kobee Factory is a place to give a try and to revisit: "Wonderful flavors"; "What incredibly, delightfully delish Syrian food, including a few dishes that were new to us. Kobee Factory mjadara and the baklava on the house for dessert were heavenly. Not much for ambience, but well worth the food!"; "Kobee was fantastic! Enough for two with leftovers for tomorrow!"; "Delicious food and a gracious staff"; "Super food! Delicious and attentive service."; "I agree with Jonathan Gold"; "Loved the falafels! As light as any I've ever had. A great find. We'll definitely be back." Take it from your fellow SCCARFers and Jonathan Gold, Kobee Factory and Syrian Kitchen has earned its place among the "101 Top Restaurants in Los Angeles." (*Bren Lucero-Wagoner*)

On December 13, thirty SCCARFers met at the *Thai Fusion Bistro* in West Hills for dinner, grand company and an escape from the Valley's (potential) fires, winds and pollution. The bistro, on the northwest corner of Victory and Platt, is a comfortable, quiet place for good conversations. Keith Miller, the Boston-Irish owner and his Thai relatives have created a splendid restaurant. ARF members Alyce Akers, Roberta Mauksch and Patrick Nicholson had frequented the *Bistro* many times before—always with pleasing results—so it was an easy choice as a SCCARF foray! Following are some of the comments by the evening's participants: "The restaurant destroyed our prejudice about going to eat in a small strip mall. The food we ordered was uniformly delicious"; "Smoked ribs were outstanding!"; "I would love to come here again"; "Delicious appetizers—huge portions! Share!"; "Plenty of parking behind the restaurant, which is always a good thing. The Pad Thai is delicious and the Thai Iced Tea is refreshing"; "A tasty variety of traditional Thai dishes. An accommodating staff"; "What a delightful time we had at SCCARF last night. The food ... was delicious and reasonably priced. The wait staff were very attentive, which is hard to do for such a large crowd"; "YUMMY!" (*Alyce Akers*)



Thank-God-the-Holidays-Are-Over Banquet

All **ARF** members (and spouses or partners) are invited to our annual banquet on **Saturday, January 13th, 2018** at the Orange Grove Bistro (University Club/Faculty Club). **Reservations are required.** Festivities will begin at 6:00 p.m. with a no-host bar, appropriate nibbles, and stimulating conversation. (We're sorry that there will be no silent auction this year.) **Dinner will be at 7 p.m.**

Entertainment will feature singer Katelyn Hunter, accompanied by Gary Matsumoto on piano and Richard Simon on upright bass. Katelyn is an immensely talented 11th grade honors student at Cerritos High School (and a recipient of the President's Education Award for outstanding academic achievement). She began vocal training in 2014, and in 2016 she was selected to join the "Drive Hope Choir", where she performed on stage with Stevie Wonder. The following year Katelyn performed with Jazz America as the band's vocalist. In 2017 she was the only high-school student to win a place (4th) in the "Dolo Coker Jazz Scholarship Foundation" high school and college competition. Katelyn is a two-time non-classical voice semifinalist of the Music Center Spotlight Awards Program.

Reservations must be received no later than January 5, 2018.

Please complete the form below and mail it to arrive by January 5, 2018 to the ARF address:

Association of Retired Faculty, P.O. Box 280578, Northridge, CA 91328-0578

I/We will attend the January 13th dinner at the Orange Grove Bistro and would like the meal choices selected. (Each entrée comes with a salad of mixed baby greens, candied pecans, and goat cheese with balsamic vinaigrette; bread; coffee, tea, or lemonade; and a choice of dessert). ***Service, tip, and tax are included in the prices listed.***

Name for name tag: _____

- Prime rib with horseradish cream sauce, polenta, and green beans (\$43)
 Seared salmon filet with leek beurre blanc, polenta, and green beans (\$39)
 Vegetables on polenta with portobello mushrooms and green beans (\$30)
 Dessert: Cheesecake with berries or Chocolate volcano cake

Name for name tag: _____

- Prime rib with horseradish cream sauce, polenta, and green beans (\$43)
 Seared salmon filet with leek beurre blanc, polenta, and green beans (\$39)
 Vegetables on polenta with portobello mushrooms and green beans (\$30)
 Dessert: Cheesecake with berries or Chocolate volcano cake

I am enclosing a check **payable to A.R.F.** for the total sum of the dinners I've chosen: \$ _____

Phone # in case we have a question about your selection(s): _____

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ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED FACULTY

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