

ARF NOTES

Publication of the Association of Retired Faculty
California State University, Northridge



VOLUME 36 no. 3

January 2024

WEBSITE: <http://www.csun.edu/arf>



ARF President's Message: Cynthia Rawitch

I've never quite been able to figure out when the January "ARF Notes" is going to arrive at our homes, as University services close for the holidays and winter break. So let me start by saying that I hope you are about to have, are having, or have had a wonderful Holiday Season with family and friends. More importantly are my wishes to all of you for a Happy, Healthy and Peaceful 2024.

Journalism Department chair Tom Reilly always used to say that in the Spring semester, the sap rises in humans as it does in trees, making the semester "livelier" than in the Fall. (That might not have been his word for describing students in Spring but you get the idea). I hope it describes all of us and the exciting activities and programming we have planned for the next several months.

We are working with the University to create and hang official door plaques on the Santa Susana "Retiree Offices" that house both ARF and CSU-ERFSA operations. We also are working with CSUN to ensure that the plaques in the soon-to-be-raised University Club all find good homes. (The presidential photos from the building were already

relocated to the Orchard Conference Center.)

In programming, our first big event is January 19, 2024, when we will have an elegant reception at the Soraya before an evening performance of *Existencia*, created by Diavolo, one of Los Angeles' most admired troupes. This exploration of human resilience in the face of disaster uses dance, acrobatics, music and stage spectacle to share an emotional and uplifting story. It is being performed to coincide with the 30th anniversary of the Northridge earthquake. It's not too late to purchase tickets and join us.

We have monthly meetings—and a continuation of our "healthy brunch" experiment—in February and March, with excellent presentations on subjects that matter to us all. April will feature our annual field trip, this year to the Huntington Library and Botanical Gardens—and what can be better than Southern California gardens in April? As always, May will bring us our annual Graduate Projects Awards Brunch.

Thanks in advance to our ARF Board members who work on these projects and to all our members who participate.

Looking forward to seeing you all at these gatherings.

Cynthia

P.S. This month's dog star is a Yorkshire terrier named Crème Brulée. She isn't mine, but whose is she? Be the first to submit the correct guess as to which ARF member is her owner and you can have your pet at the head of my last President's Message of the academic year.

ARF PROGRAM REPORT November 2023



Report to the ARF Board on the Faculty Senate Meeting, November 9th, 2023/24

At census, there were 36,368 students enrolled; FTES target met (a smidge off). However, enrollment of Asian Americans, Native Americans and Pacific Islanders trails previous year. At 5%, African American enrollment is higher than in the past.

Addressing senators' questions from previous meetings about retention of staff/faculty of color, President Beck said gains and retention are good/getting better for Asian Americans and Latinos; not so for African Americans. The University continues to address these issues.

Leslie Gomez, a representative of the consulting firm Cozen O'Connor which did an extensive evaluation of the CSU's compliance with Title IX, presented highlights of the findings, released last July with a "roadmap to effective practices." The reports evaluated practices in the CSU as a whole, and on each campus individually. Among the main findings is that there is a great deal of distrust about the processes and their visibility. Among findings about CSUN was that there is insufficient infrastructure to address DHR (discrimination, harassment, retribution) issues, as is true at other campuses and the system. Also at CSUN, the website for DHR does not match what is actually being done. A broad campus committee will look at implementation.

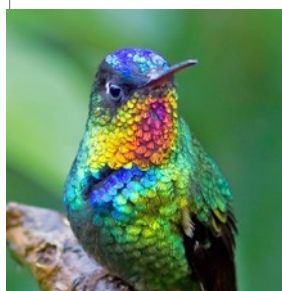
There was much discussion of faculty contract negotiations, the strike authorization vote and the "rolling strike" process, which began the first week of December when four campuses each instituted a single-day strike. (CSUN was not one of the four.)
Cynthia Rawitch



The November 17, 2023, Speaker Series featured a talk, entitled *All About Birds*, by Dr. Sandra Jewett, Professor Emeritus, CSUN Dept. of Chemistry.

Dr. Jewett regaled us with her ornithological expertise. The title of her talk was "All

About Birds." In the introduction, attendees learn about bird anatomy, migration, and of course the plethora of feather types, and their function. She shared images of the smallest creatures such as hummingbirds



(at left, the fiery throated hummingbird)

to the largest and flightless, the common Ostrich. Her extensive scientific back-



ground and her passion were palpable as she guided us into the avian world. She introduced us to 'cryptochromes' and their importance to all life. She explained that cryptochromes are connected to circadian rhythms and help birds migrate in the earth's magnetic field. We learned that cryptochromes are a class of flavo-proteins that are found throughout the animal and plant kingdom and function as blue light photoreceptors affecting diverse physiological processes in the animal as well as the plant kingdoms.

Dr. Jewett's presentation highlighted the impressive biological structure of feathers, their rainbow of colors and diversity of form. She explained that feathers are composed of the protein beta-keratin, a protein also found in the beaks and claws of all birds. The beta-keratin found in modern feathers, as opposed to the feathers of birds from the Cretaceous period, allows for increased elasticity and greater flight power. She included slides of molecular structures and a multitude of images of various birds. We marveled at the King Bird-of-Paradise tail which looks nothing like the feathers we know. Its iridescence functions as an 'attraction' tool in the male's courtship dance. Dr. Jewett continued by sharing how the interlocking structure of the feathers of many bird species creates the resilience and aerodynamics that enable flight and repel

moisture. In fact, not all birds are ‘waterproof’ nor are they all able to fly! The common ostrich is the prime example of a bird that can run but cannot fly and the cormorant lacks waterproofing. We often see cormorants sunning on trees along the shore with wings spread wide open. This behavior allows the bird to dry its plumage after customary 50-foot-deep dives in search of sustenance.

Birds come in many sizes, from the tiniest and lightest hummingbird to colossal and heaviest casowary. We were introduced to foragers and raptors, we marveled at the secrets of their migration patterns. We were astounded by the fact that every bird species has its own ‘language’ and that certain birds have the ability to produce songs and even duplicate sounds. It was fascinating and mesmerizing!

Sandra’s presentation was seamless, and time flew by (no pun intended). She made us want to learn more, and this desire was reflected in Q & A that followed her presentation.

Upcoming events

December is always a quiet time for **ARF** and scheduled activities are reserved for the various **ARF** Interest Groups. Come January, the plan is to welcome the New Year with a tantalizing evening at the Soraya to attend the 8:00 pm performance of “Diavolo: Existencia – 30 years after the Northridge Earthquake.” We will be sharing information with our **ARF** membership as soon as we finalize details for the pre-performance reception catered by the Orchard Center.

We resume our Speakers Series on Friday, February 9, 2024, at 1:00 pm with a timely and important presentation on sustainability by Dr. Maria Rita D’Orsogna, CSUN Department of Mathematics. She has created a grassroots movement to fight big oil from taking over areas of unspoiled countryside and beaches in Italy, her home country. Dr. D’Orsogna is internationally recognized as a dedicated environmentalist and activist. We look forward to her presentation and to our members’ attendance. *Patricia Miller*

EMERITI NEWS

Cynthia Desrochers (Elementary Education) wishes to announce that her co-edited book, *Faculty Peer Coaching in Higher Education—*

Opportunities, Explorations, and Research From the Field is now in print. This is the second volume in our series *Transforming Teaching and Learning in Higher Education with Information*

Age Publishing: <https://www.infoagepub.com/products/Faculty-Peer-Coaching-in-Higher-Education-Research-From-the-Field>



The 20 chapters in this volume are authored by faculty throughout the United States (including CSUs San Jose, San Luis Obispo, Pomona, Fresno, and Northridge), Canada, Turkey, England, and Oman. Cynthia co-authored the Oman article with colleagues in Oman. We describe how we used peer coaching as a tool to implement a pedagogical framework which led to a successful accreditation last year. Many CSUN faculty have worked with the faculty at Al Buraimi University College in Oman since its founding in 2003; it has been an enriching association with fascinating site visits to this unique country. *Cynthia Desrochers*



BOOK GROUPS

The Wednesday Book Group met in early March to discuss Elizabeth Strout’s *Olive Kitteridge*, which won a Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 2009 and was a TV miniseries starring Frances McDormand. The book comprises thirteen short stories, all of which are about people in a small town in Maine. Most stories introduce new characters to us, but the title character, Olive, appears in almost all of the stories and is the character most connected to others. The stories focus on the lives and personal relationships of the people in this town.

Olive takes no pleasure in frivolous small talk and is frequently irritable—one of us said shrewish—and not very likable. We occasionally see her more compassionate side. She constantly badgers her husband Henry, the local pharmacist. Henry is nice and more sociable with townspeople than Olive, while Olive has been respected

or feared by generations of her seventh-grade math students. Their married son, whom she believes she loves, would probably not say he loves his mother.

Nearly all the stories are essentially self-contained, and each is beautifully constructed, where small details and bits of dialogue help provide complex pictures of each character and their New England coastal setting. A sense of the townspeople as pretty normal emerges along with life's many complications and blows and, of course, the effects of age. There are alcoholics, extra-marital affairs, lonely lives, and untimely deaths, as everyone struggles to find happiness, often by "just keeping on". The author ends some stories with doubts as to what will happen next, adding to our involvement with the characters.

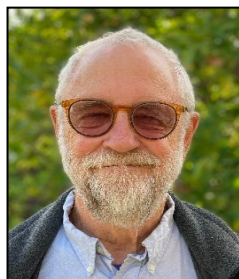
We all liked the book. Although it was an easy read, careful reading made it more satisfying for readers. In our Zoom meeting we found a great deal to talk about, e.g. would you divorce Olive if you were married to her? Did Olive have friends? Did she realize that the young man she talks to and leads to a rescue was contemplating suicide? We happily recommend *Olive Kitteridge* and discussed reading more by Elizabeth Strout.

And now to a lighter read:

Eight middle-aged English people, all strangers to each other, are mysteriously enticed by letters to go to a small, uninhabited island a mile off England's southwest coast. The hard-to-decipher signatures on some invitations suggest their host will be a U. N. Owen—(possibly unknown?).

A small boat takes them to the island where the group meets Mr. and Mrs. Rogers, both hired as butler and cook to keep the guests well fed and comfortable. Mr. Rogers announces that bad weather is delaying the arrival of Mr. Owen. The house is interesting and pleasant, and on a wall of each bedroom hangs a framed copy of the familiar old nursery rhyme "Ten Little Indian Boys". After a fine dinner, everyone is feeling jovial—until suddenly, a commanding voice, later found to have been previously recorded and emanating from a gramophone, orders "Silence". The voice then accuses each guest in turn of having murdered a specific person from their past.

As you can imagine, our attention was fully captured by this beginning of Agatha Christie's 1939 novel, *And Then There Were None*, her most popular murder mystery. The original title was racist and was changed at least twice. The remainder of the book details what happens to the visitors, one by one. The suspense gets scary in places, and all of us liked reading this story despite the fact that some of us thought that the author's solution to the mystery was too elaborate to be credible. We may want to try out another Christie mystery, perhaps *Murder on the Orient Express*. *Joel Zeitlin and Jim Allen*



The **Science Book Group** met on November 15th, 2023 to discuss *What an Owl Knows: The New Science of the World's Most Enigmatic Birds*, by Jennifer Ackerman, 2013.

Attendees for the meeting were Sandy Jewett; Phyllis Russell; Elizabeth Trybus and Heidemarie Lundblad.

Following is an abbreviated version of Ann Perkins' report on her reading of the book. (She was not able to attend the meeting.)

"I found *What an Owl Knows* to be a very informative, readable, and at times funny book. The number of owl species is quite amazing, as are the varieties of behaviors, nesting patterns, and migration patterns. The most interesting aspect to me was the different sounds made not only by different species, but by individual owls.

The amount of research and field work that is being done worldwide on owls, not only by academic researchers but by volunteers, was surprising to me. Obtaining population data on this somewhat secretive bird, especially since they are active at night, is not easy. Although I did wonder about the banding process – necessary for data but maybe stressful for the birds?

The photos of owls in the book are very good – it's

hard to imagine the patience and skill required to obtain them. One I particularly liked is that of the Northern Pygmy Owl chicks on page 113. The author notes that the shape of an owl's head and its facial characteristics (large head and large eyes relative to the size of the body), and their fixed forward gaze make them especially appealing. ...In short, I enjoyed this book very much. Made me want to go out at night and look for owls!"

For our next meeting on Dec. 20th we will discuss *Some Assembly Required: Decoding Four Billion Years of Life, from Ancient Fossils to DNA*, by Neil Shubin. 2020. An exciting and accessible new view of the evolution of human and animal life on Earth. From the author of national bestseller, *Your Inner Fish*, this extraordinary journey of discovery spans centuries, as explorers and scientists seek to understand the origins of life's immense diversity. "Fossils, DNA, scientists with a penchant for suits of armor—what's not to love?"—BBC Wildlife Magazine"

At this time all meetings will be on Zoom. Meeting dates for the academic year 23/24: 12/20; 1/17; 2/21; 3/20; 4/17; 5/15; 6/19; 7/17; 8/21. All meetings take place on Wednesdays from 1:30 pm to 3pm. *Heidemarie Lundblad*



The **Monday ARF Film Group** met remotely on May 15, 2023, via Zoom. The Group discussed the films **Living** and **The Quiet Girl**. *Note that these reviews are a bit late, they were accidentally omitted from the last issue of the newsletter.*

Living centers on the last months of life of Williams, a British civil servant, expertly portrayed by the superb acting of Bill Nighy. The script is directly based on Kurosawa's very famous film **Ikiru**. In the **Living** film, Williams has fulfilled his life's ambition of becoming a "gentleman" but his existence in the deadening British bureaucracy is empty of meaning and, as well, he has been given a diagnosis of terminal cancer. After interacting with Margaret Harris, a young woman who is full of life, well played by Aimee Lou Wood, Williams decides to embrace what is left of his life. He becomes the proponent of building a children's playground on a WWII bomb site

and fights with all his strength to get this through the stodgy British bureaucracy. This film raised the important issue of trying, towards the end of life, to evaluate the meaning of one's life. Although the film started slowly with the painful depiction of a dull rail commute and meaningless office activity, it eventually picked up its pace and became enjoyable for our group. We gave this film an average rating of **8.6 /10.0** with the scores ranging from 8.0 to 9.0.

The Quiet Girl is the story of Cáit, a neglected 9-year-old Irish girl from a completely dysfunctional family, who has been sent away to spend a summer with one of her mother's relatives. The film is dominated by the acting of Catherine Clinch who plays Cáit, and it is filmed in Gallic. Clinch dominates the screen, and she may well be the best child actress that any of our members have ever seen! Given time in the loving environment of her temporary home Cáit comes out of her shell and blossoms. All the cast members did a great job but, of particular note, is the character of Eibhlin Cinnsealach, Cáit's mother's cousin, who expertly creates the sensitive role of a wounded person who manages, nevertheless, to supply energy to love and support Cáit. In addition to the good acting, the photography of rural Ireland was excellent and brought a smile to those club members who have traveled there previously. We all loved this film and gave it an average rating of **9.3 /10.0** with the scores ranging from 9.0 to 9.5.

The **Film Group** met again on November 20, 2023, via Zoom. The Group discussed the films **The Burial** and **Past Lives**.

The Burial is based on true events with a bit of artistic embellishment. The film is built around a legal case in which a small-time funeral-home owner is pitted against a large and unethical corporation that tries to squeeze his funeral-home business into bankruptcy. The two main characters were the small businessman, played by Tommy Lee Jones and his lead attorney played by Jamie Foxx. Both of these excellent actors provided solid performances. The problem with the film is that it seemed like the underlying legal case against the predatory corporation was not presented based on the relevant facts. Instead, it focused on other important social issues. Also, the size of the two attorney teams, as presented, seemed unrealistically large for such a civil law case. However, the film did hold the group's attention and was overall well done but not ex-

ceptional. Our film group gave this film an average rating of 7.5/10.0 with scores ranging from 6.5 to 8.0.

Past Lives tells the story of two Korean people, Nora and Jung Hae, who were friends for the first half of their lives and, after a hiatus of at least 12 years meet again in New York. When they meet, Nora has emigrated to the US and is married to Arthur, an American, but Jung Hae is still single and still lives in Korea. Jung Hae is played by Teo Yoo and Nora is played by Greta Lee. Both actors did a good job but the somewhat lost and sad character played by Jung Hae was hard to watch. The dialogue between these two people as they consider what “might have been” was beautiful to watch. The first half of the film was a bit slow, but the second half made up for this, in both dialogue and photography. On the whole, we liked this film and gave it an average rating of 8.5/10.0 with scores ranging from 8.0 to 9.0. *David Schwartz*

For the month of December 2023, the group plans to discuss **Mission Impossible: Dead Reckoning Part 1** on Prime Demand (\$5.99) and **Barbie** on Prime Demand (\$5.99).



SCCARF (Social Cuisine Club of ARF) REPORT

On September 27 a small group (12) of SCCARF members met for dinner at *Paul Martin’s American Grill* in Westlake. We had a very nice SCCARF dinner there several years ago but I wanted to “expand our horizon” a bit and tried several other restaurants in Westlake. Unfortunately, I discovered that all have now switched to an “Event” model requiring large upfront financial commitments with an essentially fixed menu at rather high prices. I tried Paul Martin’s again only to discover that it also has adopted this model. Fortunately, both food and service were excellent. Some members ordered mixed drinks in addition to wine and the Filet Mi-

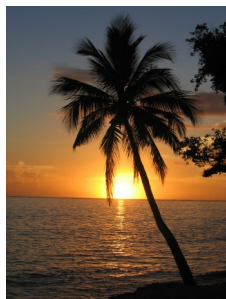
gnon for an additional \$10, but nevertheless, the total (including tips) did not reach the required minimum pay. Even after I purchased a quite expensive bottle of wine to take home, we still came up short. Fortunately, all participants added a few more bills to what we paid. As I mentioned above, food and service were excellent and so was the conversation. However, in future, I will start much earlier and make sure not to fall into the “Event” trap. As has been mentioned by others, it is not so much the food but the company that makes these dinners enjoyable. (*Heidemarie Lundblad*)

On October 25, thirteen SCCARFers enjoyed the month’s gastronomic adventure at the family-friendly *Green Cottage Restaurant* in Encino, where we sampled a vibrant fusion of cuisines from the “... nations on the shores of the brilliant azure Mediterranean Sea—Italy, Spain, France, Morocco, Greece, Lebanon, Syria, Turkey and Israel.” Our first visit to this small, cozy eatery turned out to be pleasant, though not perfect. Attendees mostly rated the food as good or better, as evident in comments received at evening’s end: “Garlic shrimp...was cooked perfectly and was very tasty”; “cranberry & pear salad was gigantic—enough for two meals—and delicious”; “dolmas were unusual, but tasty”; “chicken kabobs and hummus were great.” But some comments about the food, ambiance and the evening were a bit less upbeat: Some dubbed the restaurant “a noisy place,” its “service ...adequate,” and the “wait (for service) terrible.” But to my mind one comment summed the evening for most of those in attendance rather well: “... the company (was) absolutely excellent! A new spot we enjoyed!” Fine food is nice, but clearly camaraderie is why we dine together! (*Jim Dole*)

November 14 saw sixteen SCCARFers gathering at *Los Toros Mexican Restaurant and Cantina*, a local “hangout” for people seeking delicious Mexican food. Los Toros is a family-owned, non-chain restaurant that started small and one-by-one expanding to multiple rooms, each with its own decor or mural. The menu is diverse, very different from fast-food chains and other Mexican restaurants. We dined on a covered, heated patio, a near-ideal location for a group of our size, and everyone appeared to enjoy the intense conversation. Most folks found the food to be pleasant. I enjoyed Chicken Mole with rice and beans; the already-shredded chicken was coated with a delicious

chocolate-based sauce. I don't drink and drive, so I tried a non-alcoholic Heineken beer and found it surprisingly tasteful. Although the restaurant was not crowded, service was very slow, the waiters inattentive, the worst service I've encountered since I began dining here many years ago—an unexpected blemish on an otherwise very enjoyable evening. (*Joyce Linden*)

The Social Cuisine Club of **ARF**, known by its acronym, **SCCARF**, came into being in Sept. 2010. Except for a pandemic-induced 20-month hiatus it has continued its monthly culinary soirees unabatedly for more than thirteen years. FYI, at SCCARF events attendees order whatever they wish and pay only for that which they order; using a spreadsheet each person calculates their tab, including tax and tip, and passes that amount to the host, who then pays the bill. If cash received exceeds the total bill (venues often give discounts; many attendees round up their payment or add a few dollars) the extra goes to the **ARF** Scholarship Fund. In 2023 alone, SCCARF contributed \$623.43 to the fund! If you'd like to be informed about future events, contact Jim Dole (jim.dole@csun.edu).



IN MEMORIAM

Helen Giedt (Psychology)

passed away on November 19th, 2023. A remembrance article will be published in the March issue of *ARF Notes*.

Margaret Vernallis (Counseling). *In the November issue of the newsletter, I included a brief article written by Margaret's daughter. Below is a more detailed remembrance article written by one of her colleagues.*

Margaret Vernallis, Clinical Psychologist Emeritus, was born on August 14th, 1926 and passed away on September 7th, 2023. She earned her BA, MA, and PhD degrees from the State University of Iowa and was granted the California MFC license in 1971. She

worked in the University Counseling Center at CSUN from 1969/1970 until her retirement in 1992.

Margaret served as the liaison to the following academic entities: School of the Arts, Women's Studies (then a minor interdisciplinary program), Recreation and Leisure Studies, Religious Studies, Speech Communication, Chemistry, Geological Sciences, Math, and Human Sexuality, and provided academic advisement for entering freshmen. She also oversaw programs for adult returning students, offering re-entry workshops for returning women students and offering assertion training workshops for older students and staff.

She served on numerous committees, including the UCS (University Counseling Services) Personnel and Post-Tenure Review committees, PP&R, Committee on Organizational Development, and Student Life committee (liaison with Housing and Student Activities).

Margaret had a special interest in women's growth and emotional wellbeing, which included organizing a retreat and establishing a task force for professional women counselors in the counseling center. She served on the Sexual Harassment Board and Center for Sex Research, and served as the keynote speaker on the topic "The Assertive Professional Woman" at the first Women in Science and Engineering conference in 1977.

She facilitated many UCS groups, including Women for Yourself (with a focus on sexuality), Family Secrets, Eating Disorders, and Music Performance Anxiety Reduction.

Dr. Rick Miller, one of her UCS colleagues, noted, "Dr. Vernallis was a classic psychologist, and a reliable, ethical, and rock-solid colleague. As the CSU counseling center psychologists fought to be represented by the faculty union, Margaret stood with those of us who led the fight to eventually win recognition as full members of the Academic Faculty. Her work with students was considered among the best on our staff and as a mentor and supervisor her insights, kindness, and support were highly valued. She was missed when she retired and will be more so now that she is gone." *Judy Schmidt-Levy*

ARF EXECUTIVE BOARD, 2023-2024

President	Cynthia Rawitch cynthia.rawitch@csun.edu	<u>Members-at-Large:</u> Michael Barrett michael.barrett@csun.edu
Past President	Ron McIntyre ronald.mcintyre@csun.edu	Cynthia Desrochers cdesrochers@csun.edu
President Elect	Diane Schwartz diane.schwartz@csun.edu	David Fox fox471@att.net
Secretary	Patrick Nichelson pat.nichelson@csun.edu	Catherine Jeppson catherine.jeppson@csun.edu
Treasurer	Daniel Blake daniel.blake@csun.edu	Bob Kiddoo robert.kiddoo@csun.edu
Program Chair	Patricia Miller patricia.miller@csun.edu	Sharon Klein sharon.klein@csun.edu
Membership Chair	Tim Fox tim.fox@csun.edu	<u>Web Master</u> Eugene Turner eugene.turner@csun.edu
Newsletter Editor	Ann Perkins ann.perkins@csun.edu	
Historian	Karen Robinette karen.robinette@csun.edu	

ARF NOTES

ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED FACULTY

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE

P.O. BOX 280578

NORTHRIDGE, CALIFORNIA 91328