President’s Message

ERFA events offer friendships and new interests

By Chris Jochim
(Religious Studies)

Many of you, like myself, always enjoy reading the latest issue of the SJSU ERFA News. What a wonderful way to keep informed about former colleagues, to get reports of SJSU ERFA events, and to read commentary that reflects on SJSU campus developments. However, it may have been a while since you attended an ERFA event. ERFA’s luncheons, parties, and excursions are well attended but rarely involve even one half of our 200 strong paid membership. For those who do attend, these are wonderful events—chances to renew old friendships, to catch up on news about people’s post-retirement lives, and perhaps to make new friendships. Why not plan to attend an event soon?

The latest SJSU ERFA event was our October 11 Fall Luncheon.

(Continued on Page 2)

Calendar

Friday, Dec. 6, 2019
Holiday Luncheon
RSVP required
MLK LIBRARY,
Rms. 225-229
1-3 PM

Date to be announced
Spring Luncheon
Location: The Villages
President’s Message

A variety of ERFA activities are available

(Continued from Page 1)

Beforehand, few of us knew how truly outstanding it would be, since we had never heard the invited speaker, Kim Walesh, Director of Economic Development and Chief Strategist for the City of San Jose. In the days leading up to the event, we were not even sure whether she would be with us or in a crisis meeting about California forest fires. Fortunately, she arrived to speak on her topic: “Sneak Peak: What’s Happening in Downtown San Jose.” Speaking for myself, I’d say she knocked my socks off with her well-prepared and data-rich report. Judging by the amount of time she spent addressing questions and comments, I would say I was not alone in my opinion.

Another special event was the meeting of CSU-ERFSA, the statewide organization for retirees, which was hosted by SJSU in King Library on October 5, 2019. Since this was the first ERFSA meeting I ever attended, I was curious to see what it would be like. I was impressed, first of all, that SJSU was so well represented. In addition to myself, Past President of SJSU ERFA, Elba Maldonado-Colon, and two of our CSU-ERFSA Reps, Don Keesey and Joan Merdinger attended. Secondly, there were continuous reports and lively discussions related, for example, to the California Legislature, the CSU Board of Trustees, the CSU Academic Senate, and the CSSA (California State Student Association), thanks to special guest Grace Pang, a CSSA VP.

All of you should know that while SJSU ERFA is mainly a social organization, CSU-ERFSA is a service and political organization that fights for CSU retirees’ rights and benefits and keeps its members informed about important topics, such as, most recently, a CalPERS Board election, the search for a new CSU Chancellor, and changes in retiree benefits. You may not know that, for a slight additional cost, you can be a member of both SJSU ERFA and CSU-ERFSA. Please give serious thought to this option. CSU-ERFSA is struggling to maintain the budget needed to be an effective advocate for us due to declining membership. To learn more, look for news elsewhere in this newsletter or just go to www.csuerfsa.org.

SJSU ERFA Executive Board, 2019-20

Elected Officers
President -- Chris Jochim
Vice Pres. -- Tim Hegstrom
Secretary -- Celia Bakke
Treasurer -- Abdel El-Shaieb
Members at Large -- Mary Jo Gorney-Moreno
Lucy McProud
Carmen Sigler

Ex Officio Members
Newsletter --- Nancie Fimbel and Don Keesey (Editors)
and Clyde Lawrence (Layout/Design)

Membership Jackie Snell, Joan Merdinger Consolations Jill Cody
Activities Dolores Escobar-Hamilton Archivist Celia Bakke
Lucy McProud CSU-ERFA Reps Nancie Fimbel
Lonna Smith Don Keesey
Webmaster -- Carol Christensen
Joan Merdinger

SJSU ERFA Office
MacQuarrie Hall 438D
email: celia.bakke@sjsu.edu • Telephone: (408) 924-2478
Visit the SJSU ERFA Website at www.sjsu.edu/emeritusfaculty

Views and opinions expressed in this SJSU ERFA Newsletter are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the position of the editors or of San Jose State University.
University and Academic Senate News

By Susan McClory (ERFA Senate Representative)

The big news from the CSU is that Chancellor Timothy White is planning to retire at the end of this academic year. An Advisory Committee has been selected and a series of six Listening Tour forums were held in November and early December at campuses across the state.

On our campus, there is a third-year review of President Papazian this year. The Chancellor’s Office is accepting comments until April 27, 2020.

There is good news about the final state budget. It includes an increase of $379 Million to the CSU’s annual Operating budget and an additional $239 Million appropriated for deferred maintenance and infrastructure needs.

The SJSU Academic Senate is working on updating the membership of its committees and cleaning up old resolutions. One of the most significant changes is to the Board of General Studies (BOGS). Organization and Government (O&G) had many discussions including a meeting with BOGS regarding the proposed changes such as including tenure-track and lecturer faculties because they are the ones who most often teach General Education courses.

Another major proposal was to change BOGS from a Special Agency to an Operating Committee of the Senate reporting to Curriculum and Research (C&R), thus making it report to the Academic Senate. That would mean members would be appointed instead of elected as they are now. These proposed changes were passed by the Academic Senate at its November 18 meeting.

As we approach the holiday season and the end of 2019, your ERFA Board is making its one appeal of the year to request that you consider making a donation to the ERFA Faculty Research and Creative Activity Award fund. This fund, created by the ERFA Board in 2014, is deposited in the SJSU Tower Foundation and administered by the Tower Foundation, which is a 501C (3) organization. As a result, all donations to the ERFA Faculty Research and Creative Activity fund are tax deductible.

On behalf of the membership of ERFA, the Board has now provided awards of $2500 each for 11 faculty members from AY 2014-2015 to the present. The Board is currently working to provide funding for our planned upcoming awards for 2019-2020. The awards support current faculty – tenured, tenure-track and long-term lecturers – in their research and creative activities.

At our spring Business luncheon beginning in 2015, the ERFA Board has invited the current awardees to make a short presentation to our members informing us about their work with the award support. It has been heartwarming to hear the gratitude of our younger colleagues for this important and most welcome opportunity to further their research and creative work.

Please keep the momentum going for this initiative by sending a check made out to “Tower Foundation” and on the Memo line include “ERFA Faculty Award.” Please send your check to our Treasurer, Abdel El-Shaieb, 5032 Wilma Way, San Jose, CA 95124. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Inside the Newsletter . . .

“I enjoy the newsletter very much,” Cathy Blecki.

This is one of the submissions for the Chat Room we received recently. Chris Joachim makes the same comment in his president’s message. So this is a good time to remember the excellent work of Gene Bernadini who edited our fine newsletter four or five times a year for fifteen years. Thank you, Gene! The newsletter has kept us close, and we are all grateful to you for your fine, fine work.

The new editors are extraordinarily pleased that Clyde Lawrence, who has served in his post even longer, remains in place as our design expert.

If you see Gene or Clyde at the holiday celebration, be sure to tell him how much you have enjoyed his terrific newsletters and thank him for his years of devoted service to ERFA.

Research & Creative Activity Award

Tax deductible donation for ERFA faculty

As we approach the holiday season and the end of 2019, your ERFA Board is making its one appeal of the year to request that you consider making a donation to the ERFA Faculty Research and Creative Activity Award fund. This fund, created by the ERFA Board in 2014, is deposited in the SJSU Tower Foundation and administered by the Tower Foundation, which is a 501C (3) organization. As a result, all donations to the ERFA Faculty Research and Creative Activity fund are tax deductible.

On behalf of the membership of ERFA, the Board has now provided awards of $2500 each for 11 faculty members from AY 2014-2015 to the present. The Board is currently working to provide funding for our planned upcoming awards for 2019-2020. The awards support current faculty – tenured, tenure-track and long-term lecturers – in their research and creative activities.

At our spring Business luncheon beginning in 2015, the ERFA Board has invited the current awardees to make a short presentation to our members informing us about their work with the award support. It has been heartwarming to hear the gratitude of our younger colleagues for this important and most welcome opportunity to further their research and creative work.

Please keep the momentum going for this initiative by sending a check made out to “Tower Foundation” and on the Memo line include “ERFA Faculty Award.” Please send your check to our Treasurer, Abdel El-Shaieb, 5032 Wilma Way, San Jose, CA 95124. Thank you for your consideration of this request.
By Don Keesey (English)

SJSU-ERFA held its annual fall luncheon at the Flames restaurant on the edge of SJSU’s urban campus. At the intersection of the recently slimmed San Fernando street with its new bike lanes, protruding bus platforms, and only two lanes for cars, and Fourth Street, which had undergone a similar diet a few years ago, the restaurant was an appropriate setting for the sixty members and guests who heard Kim Walesh, the city’s chief development officer, describe some of the several building projects planned and underway in San Jose’s upwardly growing downtown.

Noting that in recent decades the city had seen the rise of several residential towers but no major office buildings, Ms. Walesh was pleased to report a new trend that will help correct San Jose’s long-standing jobs-homes imbalance. Work is underway on a fourth Adobe tower, a massive development has just broken ground on the west side of Almaden and Park, and another is planned on the east side of Almaden. What promises to be the largest project has already attracted wide interest. The city’s railroad station, currently a hub for AmTrak and three interurban lines as well as light rail, will eventually have an underground BART connection and even (the biggest dreamers hope) a high-speed rail connection. Around this transit center Google plans to build a “transit village” with office space for 25,000 workers along with extensive retail and residential space. Other companies are buying land in the same area. Can a project of this scale, big enough to shift the center of downtown a few blocks west, be built in a way to mitigate, rather than exacerbate, the city’s already woeful traffic? Urban planners worldwide will be watching San Jose.

The Fall Luncheon

Photos by Mary Jo Gorney-Moreno

Getting together at the luncheon are Tim Hegstrom and Michael and Lonna Smith.
Meeting at the luncheon are Thomas Layton and Michael Katz.

Enjoying the camaraderie are Gail Evans and Jackie Snell.

Toasting the fall season are Dolores Escobar and Beverly Waller.

Chris Jochim visits with guest speaker, Kim Walesh.
**CalPERS Information**

**Reimbursement for IRMAA Premium**

In late November of each year, all Medicare recipients receive a letter from Social Security informing them of the the deduction from their Social Security check to pay for Medicare Part B and Medicare Part D in the upcoming year. As retirees in CalPERS, you are reimbursed each month – in your retirement CalPERS check – for the basic Social Security Medicare Part B premium. For 2019, the standard Medicare Part B premium reimbursement was $135.50 per person.

You may be eligible for additional reimbursement if you have an IRMAA (income-related monthly adjustment amount) which increases your premiums due to a higher income. If you think that you are eligible for additional reimbursement for Medicare Part B due to higher income, you may be eligible for partial or full reimbursement for your IRMAA amount. If so, you must notify CalPERS in writing, and this must be done each year. You are also able to apply for IRMAA reimbursement for prior years.

If you have an IRMAA amount itemized in your November 2019 Social Security Administration letter, how do you apply for additional reimbursement from CalPERS? Mail your written request along with a copy of your November 2019 letter from the Social Security Administration which describes your benefits for the upcoming year (make a copy of each and every page). If you are married, include a copy of the complete letter to your spouse, if s/he is included in your CalPERS benefits. Send the required materials to: CalPERS Member Account Management Division, Attention: Medicare Administration, P.O. Box 942715, Sacramento, CA 94229-2715. Alternatively, you can Fax all the required materials to the following: (800) 959-6545. Expect a response from CalPERS within a few weeks. After the response to your request to CalPERS, it will take from 30-90 days before the additional reimbursement is reflected in your CalPERS retirement check. See Medicare Enrollment Guide, August 2016, pp. 27-28 (CalPERS Health Benefits Program, Publication HBD-65).

**SJSU-ERFA Film Group**

The SJSU-ERFA film group, about to complete its ninth year, meets on the first Sunday afternoon of each month. Our format is simple. The preceding week we send an email to those who have signed up indicating what film we’ll see and the local theatre where we will meet. We have a slight preference for “art house” films, but frequently choose more “main line” features. It all depends on what’s available at the best times in local theatres and what looks most interesting and likely to provoke some comment.

Those who attend are invited to gather after the show and join the discussions. These are highly informal, as is the whole operation. No RSVPs are required. Show up if you can. If you are interested in being added to the mailing list, contact Don Keesey at dkeesey2@comcast.net or Marian Yoder at yoderdm@gatlic.com.
• Catherine Blecki (English ‘99) – I am planning a trip to Rome in 2020.
• Howard Combs (Marketing) – I continue to teach in the spring and summer at Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok, Thailand while on my SJSU FERP.
• Aharon Hibshoosh (Marketing/Decision Sciences ’15)—In the past years, I have been working as a realtor at Coldwell Banker with activities in San Francisco, Oakland, Richmond and the Central Valley.
• Tai-Ran Hsu (Engineering ‘16) – I continue my teaching of the Applied Engineering Analysis class and published a textbook under the same title. It is available at Amazon.com with a 5-star review and the designation Best Business and Leadership Book of 2018. I delivered an annual lecture and session at Classes Without Quizzes to SJSU Alumni and senior Mechanical Engineering students on “Global Economy and Social Impacts” in spring semesters 2018 and 2019.
• Michael Katz (Education) – I have 5 grandchildren, 3 in Los Altos. The middle one will be a Bat Mitzvah in February; the oldest is going to Israel for a semester as a sophomore in high school. I celebrated my 50th wedding anniversary and turned 75 this year. I gave a paper at the National Society of Philosophy of Education last year, an organization of which I am a former president.
• Sigurd Meldal (Computer Engineering ’15) – I continue to serve on the Engineering Accreditation Commission of ABET with evaluations of institutions in Saudi Arabia, Palestine, and Colombia, as well as in the US this year. We spend a significant part of our time in the Sierras, taking in the beauty of nature and the tranquility of the mountains.
• Nils Peterson (English/Humanities ’99) – A new collection of poetry, All the Marvelous Stuff, was published in 2019. About this work, Coleman Barks said, his poetry is “so intelligent, lonely, funny and real. Necessary. . . .” In 2019, Nils was honored by SVCcreates for his work as poet and teacher as the OnPage Laureate of the year with its reward of $5000.
• Jackie Snell (Marketing ’12) and Nancie Fimbel (Marketing ’10)—We toured NH and Mass in early Oct., hoping to see the fall foliage. We were a bit early but we still enjoyed the White Mountains, a recreated textile mill, a Shaker Village, Plymouth Plantation (and rock), and Martha’s Vineyard. We even got to climb up on a machine harvesting cranberries.
• Jill Steinberg (Undergrad Studies/Psychology ’07) – I have a chapter on “Successful Retirement” coming out in 2020 in The Aging Consumer: Perspectives from Psychology and Marketing, 2nd ed., edited by Aimee Drolet and Carolyn Yoon (Rutledge).
• Dennis Wilcox (Journalism, ’05) -- Dennis has had a milestone year in several respects. He and Marianne left their San Jose home of 40 years plus and moved in March to the University Retirement Community in Davis, a vibrant and active community of independent residents, many of them former university professors. In April, they welcomed a 3rd grandson. In May they celebrated their 50th anniversary at the Empress Hotel in Victoria, BC, and drove leisurely down the Oregon coast back to California. September and October were spent abroad: a sojourn in Rhodes; a cruise from Athens to Barcelona via Sicily, Malta, and Sardinia; and then two weeks in southern Spain. “The Alhambra in Granada was great, but the mosque in Cordova with the cathedral inside was really spectacular,” says Dennis. “The house wine in Spain isn’t bad either, but having dinner after 9 p.m. took some adjustment.
• Gene Bernadini (Humanities) — We had a two week in depth visit to DC and NYC. In DC, along with the museums, we toured the Capitol Bldg. and my favorite, the Library of Congress, whose exquisite interior colors and design rivals European cathedrals. Our White House tour was canceled at the last minute—apparently the President didn’t want to talk to us. In NYC, we took in the new Ground Zero museum, which was awe-inspiring and disturbing—an almost sacred experience. We also dined at the Algonquin (sitting next to the Round Table shrine), and at Sardis (where the caricatures of celebrities on the walls wouldn’t be recognized by anyone under 60). People in both cities were friendly and helpful—even New Yorkers, who even asked if they could help when we stopped in mid-sidewalk to check our maps.
At the next SJSU-ERFA annual business meeting to be held in conjunction with our Spring Luncheon, the Nominations Committee will be recommending a slate of candidates to serve on the Executive Board, and members in attendance will cast their votes. The elective positions to be filled this year are: Vice President (to serve as President in the 2021-2022 year), Treasurer (2-year term), Academic Senate Representative (1-year term), and one Member-at-Large position (2-year term). If you are interested in being a candidate for any of these positions, or would like to submit a nomination, please email Chris Jochim at christian.jochim@sjsu.edu for details. Nominations close on February 1, 2020.