

SJSU ERFA Newsletter  
Fall 2022 Volume 36 Number 1  
A Newsletter of the SJSU Emeritus and Retired Faculty Association

**President's Message:** Changes and new opportunities  
By Mary Jo Gorney-Moreno

Greetings! I am looking forward to serving as your President for the upcoming year. My first event was the reception for retiring faculty hosted by Interim President Perez. This was the inaugural event at the University House for President Perez. He invited this year's retirees, along with those from the past two years, when the pandemic prevented gatherings, a total of 80 faculty. The President and Provost welcomed the guests. Then each retiree's Dean recounted a history of the retiree's time at SJSU. Each retiree was presented with a beautiful glass apple. I am always awed to hear these stories of the diversity and accomplishments of our colleagues. It swiftly took me back to my own 2010 retirement reception at what was fondly then referred to as the President's House, which is now called the University House.

Although the ERFA Board usually doesn't meet in the summer, I chaired my first meeting as President of the incoming Board on July 11—on Zoom. The Board voted to continue meeting on Zoom through the Fall semester. The Program and Activities Committees, chaired respectively by Carmen Sigler and Lonna Smith, proposed a tentative schedule of events for fall. Once details for these are finalized, you will receive notice of them. They include a post-election Zoom program as part of our goal to serve all members, distant and local. Plus, COVID permitting, we plan to resume our in-person Holiday Celebration in early December. Our intention is to continue to offer both Zoom and in-person events going forward.

As with any changing of the guard, new opportunities arise for participation on the Board. We have several openings for committee members. Some of the opportunities may require attendance at 4-6 Zoom meetings a year, others may be completed by working one-on-one with a Committee Chair. The Program Committee, chaired by Carmen Sigler, is looking for assistance with graphic design for developing and posting flyers for our programs and an additional member to contribute new ideas. The Newsletter Committee, chaired by Nancie Fimbel needs a Co-Editor. The movie group needs a Co-Chair with Marian Yoder. Please send me an email at [mj.gorney-morneo@sjsu.edu](mailto:mj.gorney-morneo@sjsu.edu) if you are interested in volunteering for any of these positions.

I do have some sad news to share with you. Our beloved Board member Professor Don Keeseey (English, 2001) passed away this June. Don served many roles on our Board. He was recently Co-Editor of the Newsletter, Chair of the Movie Group, past CSU-ERFA Representative and a long time Board member. He will be missed in many ways for his erudite comments, his extensive knowledge of the film world, his beautiful, expressive writing and editing, his gentle laugh, and his kindness to all.

## **CalPERS Board Election**

By Chris Jochim

As reported in the September 2022 newsletter of the CSU Emeritus and Retired Faculty and Staff Association (CSU-ERFSA), the CalPERS Board of Administration election will take place from August 26, 2022 to September 26, 2022. Eligible voters may vote on paper, by telephone, or on the internet. Only eligible retired CalPERS members may vote in the election. If no candidate receives a majority vote in the election, a runoff between the two candidates with the most votes will be held from November 4 to December 5, 2022.

CSU-ERFSA has endorsed Randy Cheek, lobbyist and legislative advocate of the SEIU Local 1000 for the last 14 years and Director of Legislation for the Retired Public Employees Association (RPEA). More information on Randy Cheek can be found in the newsletter at <https://www.csuerfesa.org/view/download.php/news--views/the-reporter/september-2022-reporter>.

Two other candidates in the race are Tim Behrens of the Department of Developmental Services and Yvonne Walker of the Department of Justice. There were to be two other elections for the CalPERS board of administration in late summer and fall, but both Theresa Taylor, an incumbent, and Kevin Palkki were unopposed. Both will serve four- year terms starting January 16, 2023.

## **Did You Know?**

By Tim Hegstrom

- **CFD CAN HELP.** We have mentioned previously that Jean Shiota in the Center for Faculty Development (CFD) can be a wonderful resource for Emeritus Faculty. ([jean.shiota@sjsu.edu](mailto:jean.shiota@sjsu.edu) or 408-924-2884). Recent experience making simple requests via email or telephone has reaffirmed that observation. She can often help you get an upgrade for software that you need. Further, CFD offers an array of on-line tutorials to keep you technologically proficient. <https://www.sjsu.edu/cfd/help/tutorials.php>
- **YOU ARE ELIGIBLE FOR SAVINGS ON SUBSCRIPTIONS.** Emeritus faculty who maintain their SJSU email account with the .edu suffix are eligible for a reduced on-line rate for the New York Times and other publications. The faculty rate for the on-line NYT, for example, is \$7.50 monthly instead of the usual \$17.
- **SILVER SNEAKERS IS A WAY FOR SENIORS TO STAY FIT.** Those with PERS Select, PERS Choice and PERSCare Medicare plans are eligible for membership in “the highly popular SilverSneakers fitness program as a benefit.” Many others are eligible as well. There is an easy-to- navigate “eligibility” screen at the web-site below. It takes less than 5 minutes to determine eligibility. “Silver Sneakers” status allows seniors free access to many gyms (e.g., 24 Hour Fitness, Gold’s). Just present the Silver Sneakers card upon entry. Silver Sneakers also provides exercise classes, on line or in person. A handy email message with participating gyms and instructors is sent at regular intervals. ([silversneakers.com](http://silversneakers.com)).

## **Chat Room;** Special News from and about our members

This column contains news about travels and activities volunteered by the membership. Members are invited to send news about themselves to Nancie Fimbel at [fimbeln@gmail.com](mailto:fimbeln@gmail.com) or by snail mail at 239 Cypress Point Drive, Mountain View, CA 94043

- Anne Fountain (World Languages & Literature, '12) and Mike Conniff traveled to northwestern Vietnam in August to inaugurate an elementary school that Mike's Rotary Club had built in a poor rural district. Hundreds showed up for the ceremony, where children received backpacks and candy.
- Cindy Margolin (Psychology, '04) was presented with the 2022 Be the Difference Award from the Volunteer Center of Santa Cruz County for her work as a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) and Seymour Discovery Center (UCSC Long's Marine Lab) Volunteer.
- Pat Nichols (Linguistics & Language Dev't, '00) has new paperback and electronic editions of her 2009 book on languages used in her home state of South Carolina in the early days of contact between Indigenous people, Europeans, and Africans. She notes in the updated preface that similar forces were at work in California all the years she was living and teaching here, but they were difficult to untangle without the perspective of distance. She hopes her efforts will help South Carolina sort out its issues.
- Kim S. Uhlik (Recreation '11) is being featured in a wide-ranging solo exhibition comprised of 22 of his artworks in the Gallery at Spring Valley Library from September 22 through November 13. Included in the exhibit are smaller format watercolors and digital photo prints, as well as large format oils and acrylics on canvas.
- Dennis L. Wilcox (Journalism '05) and Marianne are making up for lost travel time during the pandemic. They visited Jordan and Egypt in March, toured Spanish Basque country and Portugal in June and will visit France in September. In addition to the travel, Dennis has completed the 12<sup>th</sup> edition of his major textbook, *Public Relations Strategies & Tactics*, which is being published by Pearson in January.
- John Pollock (English '03) and his wife Penny rented a house with their son and his family at Sea Ranch this summer. With two baby grandchildren included, John says it wasn't the most restful of vacations, but they enjoyed the spectacular scenery. John's brother, a now-retired architect, designed two of the houses at Sea Ranch years ago, so it was a particularly special trip.

## **Bill Russell's Debut: Being There**

By James P. Walsh

[https://scholarworks.sjsu.edu/erfa\\_bios/273/](https://scholarworks.sjsu.edu/erfa_bios/273/)

Emeritus for 27 years, that means old. While not present at the Creation, I was present—watchful too—the night Bill Russell created modern basketball. He did it on December 1, 1953, at San Francisco's rickety Kezar Pavilion in Golden Gate Park. Being present for that dramatic, historic event remains an unforgettable excitement, a privilege within a long life.

I was in high school and my brother Leo was attending the University of San Francisco. Besides the comfort and convenience of living at home, I had an older brother who indulged me greatly. Despite our age gap, he took me most places in 1950s San Francisco that interested young adults. Over dinner that winter evening, Leo told me to expect a good time at Kezar. To help us out the door early, our mother hurried the meal and our father volunteered to do the dishes.

Leo had read in the USF student paper, *The Foghorn*, that a tall and agile sophomore had improved greatly. Students even snuck into practices to watch young Bill Russell. Beguiled by what they saw, they concluded that, at worst, Russell could put on his own Kezar show. At best, Russell and the Dons might humble the great University of California.

Once out the door Leo and I hopped the corner bus at Fulton St. and 30th Ave., then walked to Kezar across the Golden Gate Park Panhandle. Inside we grabbed seats at quarter court at the edge of the Pavilion's unique spring-supported hardwood floor. So close to the action that night, we watched sweat drip.

Cal's veteran team included big Bob McKeen whom the press labeled the "All-American Candidate." He held Cal's career scoring record for 30 years. The essence of Bill Russell's basketball debut was his blocking 13 shots, 8 atop McKeen. Russell simply extinguished McKeen's offense. USF rooters began applauding McKeen's sky-hook shots in hopes of catching Russell's redirects. So grim became the reality that McKeen exited the game early. According to one unkind reporter, he got his best looks at the basket from the Cal bench.

In tandem with Russell, K.C. Jones punished Cal's point guard even more effectively, though less dramatically. Jones held McKeen's supporting star Bob Matheney scoreless but for one lapse late in the game. That was while, unbeknownst to Coach Phil Woolpert or even Jones perhaps, Jones was verging upon a ruptured appendix that ended his season at so promising a start.

Whenever other greats such as Joe Montana, Barry Bonds, or Stephen Curry have taken their positions, I could never assume victory. Only Bill Russell radiated that assurance. This remained so even as the NBA changed the rules of the game and the configuration of the court to combat his dominance.

Sports history began that night at Kezar when I watched Bill Russell tug up his black leather knee pads and saunter towards the half-court circle. Thanks, Leo.

## **Melting Glaciers, expensive crab, Covid! Yet a Grand Tour!**

By Diana Wu

After hibernating since March 2020, my husband and I decided to leave our comfort zone by joining a 10-day cruise to Alaska. Despite news reports about COVID cases on several cruise lines, we set off, trusting our vaccines and our immune systems.

This trip, starting from the iconic Golden Gate Bridge, included four Inside Passage ports: Juneau, Ketchikan, Skagway, and Port of Rupert in Canada. Also included was Glacier Bay National Park. This land has been inhabited for millennia by the Tlingit, who call it Haa Aani, "our homeland." After two days at sea, we arrived at Juneau, the capital of Alaska. Juneau was named the capital in 1906, when the government was moved from Sitka following orders by the U.S. Congress. It was chosen because it was conveniently located for sea travel during the gold rush era. Our tour took us to Gold Nugget falls adjacent to the Mendenhall Glacier. Sadly, 75 miles of glacier have melted due to global warming. Pieces of ice that were still part of the glacier 50 years ago now float in the bay.

A park ranger from the National Park Department came on board while we sailed through Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve on our way to Skagway. He explained how these glaciers were formed, how they were discovered 200 years ago, and how much they have deteriorated and disappeared in the last 150 years. Will these magnificent formations survive for our grandchildren to see?

Skagway is home to gold-rush-era buildings, now preserved as part of the Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park. We learned some interesting facts about this place. Before COVID, the population was 1191; since the 2020 census, it has fallen to just over 900. During the pandemic, with no cruise business, Skagway faced the threat of closing altogether, but major cruise lines and the government offered support. We also learned there is only one K-12 school in the entire city. Most parents homeschool their children during the long, cold, dark winter months. We felt lucky to have a sunny clear day in Skagway. The downside of that was that the temperature was 79 degrees, almost a record high, another sign of global warming.

In Skagway we boarded a train up to the Yukon in Canada. Our route was parallel to that of the White Pass & Yukon Route Railway, "The Scenic Railway of the World." It was built in 1898 during the Klondike Gold Rush. Now vintage locomotives pass the famously steep Chilkoot Trail and offer spectacular mountain views. Climbing nearly 3000 feet in 20 miles, the narrow-gauge railroad is an International Historic Civil Engineering Landmark.

Returning south to Ketchikan, "the first city of salmon," we visited Totem Heritage Center. The Center, first opened in 1976, has many original 19th century hand-carved Tlingit and Haida totem poles, symbols of power and leadership. Our major surprise here was at a restaurant: the famous Alaska king crab cost each of us \$57.99 (more than \$75 including taxes and tip). That's for one crab leg, a small bowl of clam chowder, and fries or rice!

Our final stop was at Port of Rupert in Canada. It is best known for bald eagles, and we were not disappointed. I have never seen so many bald eagles! We hiked the

Rushbrook Trail on Kalen Island, admiring the green and lush landscape and beautiful flowers. A Safeway and a Walmart enable international tourists to experience our American/Canadian shopping culture.

On the eighth night, one of our group members (out of 12, all over 65 years old) started showing COVID symptoms. The quick antigen test confirmed it; the following day, two more tested positive. These passengers were reminded to stay in their staterooms while they were sick, but no quarantine was required of them. The staff tried to sanitize common areas and keep passengers from crowding the elevators. But it wasn't enough. This loose management might be why there are cases of COVID in most cruise lines. Our three shots were not enough to protect us from being infected.

Nonetheless, it was a grand tour. We were lucky to be able to visit all the ports as planned, and we enjoyed the hospitality and delicious food on board. Over the course of our trip, we watched shows and danced late into the nights. We have no plans to take another cruise in 2022, but perhaps 2023 will be a better and safer year to go to sea again.

### **A Tribute to Don Keeseey (1937-2022)**

By Gene Bernardini

Don Keeseey's unexpected heart attack in early June was a shock. Though physically slowed with medical issues, he was still mentally sharp, socially active and engaged at SJSU as co-editor of the ERFA Newsletter.

The Don I knew was a private man, self-contained and stoic, but always ready for a conversation. He had an insatiable curiosity with eclectic interests, and he loved taking apart conventional thinking with a Socratic style of questioning--conducted with a gentle smile and good humor. His professional accomplishments at SJSU were impressive: from Assoc. Dean of Humanities and Arts to Graduate Coordinator of English to Academic Senator for three terms, Don served the institution where he made his career. His scholarship was also exemplary: in particular, his book, *Contexts for Criticism*, which explicated multiple approaches to understanding literature, went through four editions over two decades.

In his online (auto)biography for ERFA Don describes his tenure at SJSU as one of great luck. He felt lucky to teach at a school that provided "a low-cost education to middle- and working-class students," one with "collegial colleagues and benign administrators" and with mature and interested students "who made discussing literature a pleasure." Above all, he wrote, "I was lucky to have a job where I got paid to read books and talk about them. I couldn't think of anything I'd rather do." It would be hard to find a better summary of a successful life and career.

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**In Memoriam**

James Asher (Psychology '92) 1929-2022  
Paul Kauppila (University Library) 1960-2022  
Donald Keeseey (English '01) 1937-2022  
Ruth Wilson (African American Studies '19) 1952-2022.

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