

ARF NOTES: publication of the Association of Retired Faculty, California State University Northridge



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

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: JOYCE LINDEN



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Upcoming Program

November 13th, University Club (Orange Grove Bistro) at 2 pm. Flavia Fleischer, "Deaf Studies: what it means to CSUN and to our World."

I thought I would take some "personal space" in this issue of *ARF Notes* to share a little about myself, which will include a bit of SF Valley history. Many of you don't know me because I spent most of my teaching career at CSUN in Monterey Hall (College of Ed) or in the Michael D. Eisner College of Education Building, both locations at extreme edges of campus.

I have the distinction of having grown up in Northridge – unusual for someone my age to have stuck around so long! I also have the distinction of having had Deaf parents. As a baby, I lived on Balboa Blvd. on the edge of Van Nuys airport where my Dad raised oranges. The government wanted to expand "Metropolitan Airport" during WW II, so we moved for a short time to Reseda, then to Los Angeles. In 1949, we moved to an orange grove on the corner of Wilbur & Devonshire in Northridge, and I attended Northridge Elementary.

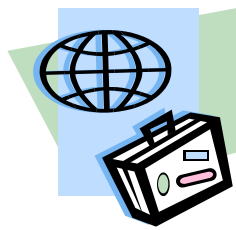
I first attended CSUN in 1958 when it was LA State College – Valley campus. By the time I got my BA in Elementary Ed, it had become San Fernando Valley State College. I received my MA from Cal State LA in Special Education with an emphasis on teaching Deaf & Hard of Hearing (DHH) students, K – 12, and then taught for the LAUSD and also in Simi Valley, working with DHH students.

In 1965, I began a part-time career interpreting in sign language for Deaf students at CSUN and also taught American Sign Language (ASL) in Adult Education for the (LAUSD). In 1975, I entered the National Leadership Training Program at

CSUN, which was founded by Drs. Wayne McIntire and Ray Jones, and was then hired full-time in the Department of Special Education at CSUN, preparing teachers of the Deaf. In 1980, I went on leave for 3 years to teach and to work on my doctorate at Gallaudet University in Washington, DC.

After I my retirement in 2002, the Deaf Studies Department hired me to teach a course for them. I also taught ASL for Pierce College in their High School Outreach program. I have become hard of hearing over the years and now wear two hearing aids. I consider myself an advocate for the language and culture of Deaf people.

Thus I was happy to invite, on behalf of the **ARF** program committee, Dr. Flavia Fleischer to speak to us next month at the **ARF** meeting on November 13th. Flavia is the Deaf daughter of Dr. Lawrence R. Fleischer who founded the Department of Deaf Studies, one of the few such departments in the US, which is housed in the College of Education. Larry, who was also Deaf, was the Chair of that Dept. until his sudden and untimely death in 2009. Flavia carries his vision and brings a fresh, enthusiastic spirit to our campus as the current Chair of that Department, following in her father's footsteps. Don't miss her talk, 2 p.m. November 13th at the University Orange Grove Bistro. I hope to see you all there.



EMERITI NEWS

Pamela Bourgeois (English). I am still FERPing, and coordinating the UDWPE [Upper Division Writing Proficiency Exam] for both semesters. John [Clendenning] and I just returned from our 3-week African safari to Zambia, Botswana, and South Africa. Best trip ever!

Gwen Brewer (English). Gwen Brewer is living with her daughter's family in the Washington, DC, area. Her daughter Holly Brewer is an endowed professor of history at the University of Maryland. Gwen visits her other daughter Carla Brewer Padrotti in Santa Cruz twice a year.

Van Dyk Buchanan (Elementary Education). We have limited mobility, so we have not left Santa Barbara in a year.

Virginia Elwood-Akers (Library). I am writing a new book on single women in the American west.

Sue Fritsche (widow of Gene Fritsche, Geology). I enjoy traveling. Many of our trips combined service projects (Habitat for Humanity) with sightseeing. A Habitat house in Thailand will honor my [late] husband Gene in January, and I will be going with other family members.

Robert Hiegert (Athletics). On June 3rd, 2013 I retired from serving as Commissioner for the California Collegiate Athletic Association (CCAA). I served for 16 years following leaving CSUN.

Stephen Oppenheimer (Biology). Steve is a Presidential Award Recipient for Mentoring Elected Fellows in the American Association for the Advancement of Science. He is also the recipient of 26 awards and honors for Research and Teaching. He thanks ARF for truly distinguished work over the years. His spouse Carolyn is an Audubon Nature Leader.

Wayne Plasek (Sociology) was hospitalized after a stroke, but is now home and much improved. Jeanne Glazer and Joyce Linden report that he looks well, and is communicating more easily, but he still has some trouble reading and writing. He is getting Physical Therapy and Speech therapy twice a week. Wayne appreciates your cards and messages.

Thomas Potter (Elementary Education). I enjoy square dancing and on occasion I participate in jazz dancing to traditional jazz (New Orleans style). I am active in the Early Ford Mercury V-8 Club. Hiking and nature study are occasional interests, as is limited biking.

Jane Prather (Sociology). We are in Pine Mountain, Calif., during the summer – May-September – and the rest of the year in NYC.

Elizabeth Schneider (Journalism). As an ordained minister of Religious Science, I serve as a volunteer staff minister at the Granada Hills Center for Spiritual Living. Some of my short talks and affirmative prayers can be found at: www.revlizwritings.blogspot.com.

Anita Segalman (widow of Ralph Segalman, Sociology). When I was able to drive, Vivian Himelson and I had season tickets to the Mark Taper Forum. My problem is now I use a walker and oxygen that take up space in a car, and I cannot deal with steps.

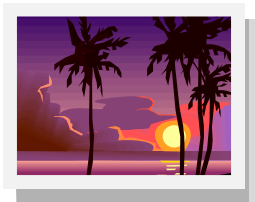
Dick Strayer (Business and Economics). I visited South Africa numerous times, some of the same places as Bonnie [Faherty]. It is a fantastic experience, especially watching a pride of lions taking down a prey. I've also visited Malawi, Mozambique and others, and been to Tampico, Mexico as we are assembling and distributing 550 wheelchairs free to the needy. In about two months, we will do the same in Guyana. These projects are done through Rotary and an Internet club that I recently chartered, www.oneworldrotary.org. I invite all to attend one of the meetings that are available--no charge and you do not have to be a Rotarian. I have traveled to about 80-some countries, depending on the definition of a country. The most memorable and surreal was a trip to the Antarctica with a British Research Team where a member swam (45 minutes!) in the 29 degree water--with only a "speedo." Amazing.

William Vincent (Kinesiology). I taught at Brigham Young University as an adjunct professor (half time) with the Dept. of Exercise Sciences from 2003—2012, and served a mission in the Pacific Islands for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints 2001-2003.

Muriel Wright (Mathematics). Tom Wright had a successful Featured Artist Show at the Cayucos Community Art Gallery of the “color field” knife paintings (July 21st through Sept. 18th , 2013).

Jennifer Zvi (Center on Disabilities). I am currently an Adjunct Professor at Lewis University, teaching in the newly established Early Childhood Education Department.

For those who would like to provide ongoing information about the health status of a relative or loved one, the online organization CaringBridge enables people to stay in touch with an ill person and receive updates on their health status and care. It allows for email communication between and among ones friends, as replies can be posted on that person's site. For more information, check the website: <http://www.caringbridge.org/about>.



IN MEMORIAM

David Benson (Administration) passed away on October 1st, a few weeks before his 82nd birthday. He had been in good health until about three months earlier, when an infection in his foot would not heal. His immune system was unable to contain the infection and doctors indicated they would need to amputate below his knee. Dave chose not to undergo the surgery, entered hospice care and died soon after.

Dave Benson joined the faculty of San Fernando Valley State College in the Department of Physical Education in 1961 as a golf instructor. He moved quickly through a series of administrative positions, eventually becoming Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. From the late 1970s until his appointment as President of Sonoma State University in 1984, Dave was the chief academic officer at CSUN. One example will illustrate how much he was admired across campus. When his appointment as President of Sonoma State University was announced, he made clear to colleagues that he did not want a big retirement party. However, he did agree that we could collect funds for a retirement party if we limited contributions to no more than \$5 per person. Over 600 individuals sent in \$5 and the funds raised were enough to fund a trip for Dave and Betty to Scotland, where Dave enjoyed playing at some of the world's finest golf courses.

Dave arrived on the Sonoma campus during a period of great turmoil; within a year, the campus had returned to a state of normalcy, for which President Benson received much credit. His patience, listening skills, even-tempered manner and open approach to all segments of the campus community were much admired. Dave's life was extended by a kidney transplant over 15 years ago. He led a busy and healthy life for many years after the transplant. Dave is survived by wife Betty, daughter Mary Dial who is a physician in Ojai and other family members. A private family memorial service is planned. *Reported by Don Cameron.*

Gordon Lewthwaite (Geography). Gordon Rowland Lewthwaite was born August 12th, 1925 in Oamaru, New Zealand. He died peacefully, September 18, 2013, at home in Northridge, California. He attended and fondly remembered Waitaki Boys High School in Oamaru. Following his undergraduate degree at the University of Otago, and Masters' degrees in Geography and History, he came to the United States as a Fulbright Scholar to pursue a PhD in Geography at the University of Wisconsin. After receiving his PhD in 1956, he taught at the Universities of Oklahoma and Auckland (NZ) before joining the then newly founded San Fernando Valley State College in 1959, and taught Geography at CSUN for 32 years before retiring in 1992. His colleagues at CSUN remember him as gentlemanly, upbeat, and friendly, and a serious scholar staunchly committed to his wide-ranging research in cultural and historical geography. His fair-mindedness and intellectual manner extended also to his roles in his church where he taught Sunday school, chaired committees, and sought peaceful resolutions and scientifically tempered insights over many years. He was well known by colleagues, friends, and family for his irrepressible sense of humor, contributing many a pun to liven most any gathering.

He is survived by his wife of almost 60 years, Lydia, by daughters Rebecca and Karen and many nieces and nephews. A memorial service was held on September 29th. The family suggests, in lieu of flowers, that contributions be considered to Project Angel Food (www.angelfood.org) or the American Scientific Affiliation (www.network.asa3.org). *(From an Obituary in the LA Times, Sept. 26th, 2013).*

REPORTS FROM PREVIOUS PROGRAMS

JUNE PICNIC ITEM

ARF Constitution Amended to Eliminate Membership Classes

At the June 1st, 2013 general meeting, the **ARF** membership approved an amendment to the **ARF** Constitution that removed the distinction between “members” and “associate members.” Previously, retired full-time faculty were “members” and part-time faculty who were retired with a PERS pension, survivors of deceased **ARF** members, and faculty from other institutions were “associate members.” The only differences between the two membership classes was that associate members could not vote or hold office. Although the amendment was originally conceived as a way to simplify the initial fall letter mailings to different membership classes, it was recommended by the **ARF** Board because it seemed fair for all members to be able to vote and hold office. Members interested in the exact wording of this amendment can view Article III of the **ARF** constitution at the web site: <http://www.csun.edu/arf/constitution.htm>.



SEPTEMBER PROGRAM

CSUN Biology Professor Cindy Malone gave the first Wednesday afternoon presentation this year. Cindy is the director of the CSUN-UCLA Bridges to Stem

Cell Research Program funded by the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine. In this program, CSUN students perform stem-cell research at UCLA. Cindy is responsible for the selection and preparation of the students and for their placement with faculty at UCLA. The program provides a stipend for the students so that they can devote full time to their studies and research. Some funds are used for their research projects at UCLA.

Cindy described the recruitment and preparation of the students and their placement with research projects at UCLA. She noted that students were somewhat intimidated when they first started their research projects, but preparation of the second and later groups of students included presentations by students who were currently doing the research at UCLA, and this helped prepare the CSUN students for the research environment there.

Twenty students have started the program and all but one have completed it successfully. These students have gone on to graduate biology programs. The program is continuing with ten additional students this year.

Cindy also discussed the biology of stem cells. She said

that there was a lot of information and misinformation in the public media and she pointed out some important aspects of stem cells for the attendees. She noted that there are many sources besides embryonic stem cells, whose use has caused controversy. Cindy discussed potential applications for stem cells, but warned against individuals who say that these applications are available now.

OCTOBER PROGRAM

In October Paul Laverack, a CSUN MA graduate who was a recipient of an **ARF** Memorial Award Scholarship, presented part of the film he made for his MA project, *Labor Action*, and discussed the content and the making of the film.

The film deals with struggles of low-paid hotel workers in Southern California who are trying to get union recognition from hotels run by Hyatt and Disney. In addition to interviews with the workers, there are interviews with union officials, labor leaders, academics and intellectuals commenting on the state of labor unions in the US.

The film contrasts the efforts of these low-paid workers in the US, where unions are weak compared to unionized workers in Sweden, which Paul described as the most unionized country in the world. To accommodate the usual schedule for **ARF** presentations, he showed only the portion of the film that dealt with unions in Sweden. He noted that Swedish unions have been more successful than American unions (though not completely successful) in fighting off efforts to reduce workforce unionization.

In response to questions, Paul said that he knew no Swedish and was fortunate that all the individuals he contacted there could speak English. He also answered a few questions about the technology he used for producing the film: current digital technology for producing commercial-quality digital films is available at a relatively low cost.

Paul is currently producing a revised version which he plans to try to show to a wider audience. **ARF** members who missed the talk and those who want to see the full 86-minute film can see it at <http://www.elnuevosol.net/portada/labor-action-fifteen-fights-in-the-battle-for-a-better-world>. This web site is the blog for CSUN’s Spanish Journalism program.

NOVEMBER 13TH PROGRAM

Dr. Flavia Fleischer, Chair of the Department of Deaf Studies in the College of Education, will be speaking on “Deaf Studies: what it means to CSUN and to our World.” Addressed in the presentation will be the different aspects of Deaf Studies from language to history to culture.



FILM GROUPS

TUESDAY GROUPS: In October, the group which meets on the 1st Tuesday of each month at 1:30 discussed Woody Allen's vibrant modern drama, *Blue Jasmine*, inspired by Tennessee William's *Streetcar Named Desire*. Like Blanche Dubois, Allen's lead character, Jasmine, has fallen from an elegant lifestyle and seeks a living arrangement with her working class sister in San Francisco. Played with a riveting performance by Cate Blanchett, Jasmine is an elegant socialite married to a corrupt hedge fund manager, played by Alec Baldwin, and living a 1% lifestyle in the Hamptons and New York. In a moment of blind rage over her husband's infidelities and desire to leave her for a younger woman, she reports him to the FBI, and in the process, loses everything. Although she tries to rebuild her life in San Francisco, she suffers from self-delusion and deceit which prods her undignified descent into self-destruction, depression, mental illness and, eventually, homelessness. The setting in San Francisco and the photography are beautiful, and the supporting cast is excellent. Jasmine is ultimately left sitting alone on a park bench, talking to herself. The film group remarked that her plight can easily ignite fears of becoming a bag lady. The story is instructional in that it mirrors the economic crises of today, and the effects of greed on people and their relationships. Although the script and the plot seemed to have a number of gaps, the film received an 8.75 rating by the group. The moral: Deceit doesn't pay. Family relationships can be pushed to the edge and collapse. *Reported by Elizabeth Schneider.*

Only 3 people saw the second film *Short Term 12* and felt it was a quality film, rating it between 8 and 9. Film group members could relate to the emotions of the young residents of a group home as well as to the staff members who had direct interactions with them. The movie had a documentary feel to it, making it realistic and believable. It was well-acted by unknowns and kept our interest throughout. *Reported by Sandy Horwitz.*

Films for discussion at the November 5th meeting will be *Captain Phillips* and *Enough Said*. We will meet at the home of Joyce Linden, 20637 Lemarsh Street, Chatsworth. Phone: 818-882-2098. The group continues to be open to new members.

Ten members of the ARF Tuesday at Two Film Group met at the home of Lee Gassert and discussed *The Way Way Back*. Ratings ranged from 5 to 8 with a mean of 7.45 and mode of 8. The theme of the movie was agreed to be both a "coming of age" for the 14 year-old protagonist and the achievement of self-esteem for both him and his mother. The next meeting of the group was on September 24th at the home of Pat Murray where the movie *Short Term 12* was discussed. A report will appear in the next newsletter. *Reported by Lee Gassert.*

MONDAY GROUP: Ten members of the Monday Film Group gathered at the home of Mary Corcoran on Labor Day to discuss Woody Allen's latest film, *Blue Jasmine*, and *Red 2*, the sequel to the popular *Red*, released in 2010. *Blue Jasmine* received mixed reviews, but all agreed that it was not the typical Woody Allen fare. In general, members lauded Allen's brilliance as a writer/director, but lamented the lack of humor which usually, either subtly or explicitly, infuses his films. Members ranked this film at 7.85. (*For a full review of this movie, see the Tuesday Film Group report, above.*)

The discussion on *Red 2* was short. One member described the film as "mindless entertainment," and another as a "summer popcorn movie." Yet another member likened it to a James Bond thriller, but lacking the finesse of those films. In general, this action comedy was thought to be a poor sequel to *Red*, with one member attributing it to the diminution of Helen Mirren's role. She was a major, canny presence in the first film, but reduced to about 30 minutes of screen time in the second. One member thought that the sequel was devoid of the wry humor and substance of the original and lacked a well-written script. Catherine Zeta-Jones, a new character in a relatively brief appearance as a ruthless Russian secret agent, is given such vacuous lines to mouth that she surely must have experienced relief when she took a bullet and died. Despite all the action and violence, some members thought the movie was pretty boring. Another was annoyed by the carelessness of the special effects crew, as in Zeta-Jones' death scene where Bruce Willis is seen applying pressure to her lower abdomen, apparently in an effort to stem the bleeding, except that there wasn't any blood. That may have been because she was shot in the upper chest, although there was no blood there either.

The consensus was that the problem with *Red 2* was that it was all about special effects, with non-stop explosions, shoot-outs with automatic weapons, and even a nuclear bomb that explodes in the sky. One member observed that the film was mildly entertaining, but was so contrived, silly and preposterous, that its enjoyability was severely limited. Members ranked this film at 6.4.

Ten members of the Monday Film Club met on September 30th at the home of Bob Hanna to discuss two quite different films, *The Butler*, which on the surface follows the life of a Black long-serving White House butler while actually chronicling the history of race relations in America, and *The Family*, a farce about a former mafia boss who is ensconced in a witness protection program in a small village in France.

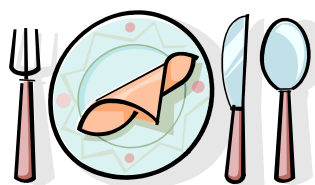
The Butler was uniformly praised by all as a very powerful film, with a near flawless script, skilled direction and editing, and offering nuanced performances that members agreed would likely result in Oscar nominations for Forest Whitaker as the butler, Cecil, and Oprah Winfrey as his wife, Gloria. Other notable performances were delivered by David Oyelowo, who plays

Cecil's older son, Louis, and Vanessa Redgrave, who plays a plantation owner whose son brutally murders Cecil's father. The scene where she assuages her guilt by making Cecil a "house nigger" is chilling, showing her lack of any real compassion for the boy—or any outrage at her son's blatant act of murder. Redgrave's advice to Cecil, as she trains him for his new duties (that will eventually prepare him for his role as a White House butler) is that his presence must be so subtle that the room should feel empty when he's in it—lines delivered with such an icy, flat demeanor that it's clear he's not even in the room as she's speaking to him! The only negatives members voiced about this film centered on the choice of actors to portray some of the Presidents, in particular Robin Williams as Eisenhower and John Cusak as Nixon. Several members commented on the effective use of juxtaposition to make the history of Civil Rights so compelling; for example, the one showing the White House staff setting the table, juxtaposed with one at a lunch counter where Cecil's son Louis and his fellow Freedom Riders are demonstrating in a non-violent protest, while patrons are breaking and throwing dishes at them. Members have this film a high 8.9 ranking.

The Family elicited a wide range of reactions. It had a strong cast of actors—Robert De Niro, Michelle Pfeiffer, and Tommy Lee Jones—as well as a compelling theme—family unity means everything—but the consensus was that the movie fell short of expectations. De Niro is presented as a likable sort of guy, which is a characterization he emphasizes in the memoir he is writing. But in fact he's amoral, kills without remorse, and shrugs off the violent means he uses to dispatch his enemies and even his friends. Members saw several incongruities in the film, not the least of which is a witness protection program located in France rather than in an ordinary Midwestern town. Also, De Niro, who is being guarded 24/7 by two FBI agents is somehow able to leave unnoticed and purchase the materials needed to create a sizable bomb that he will use to blow up a fertilizer plant that he holds responsible for turning his water brown. Incredibly, the resulting blast makes the water instantly crystalline and drinkable. Although some enjoyed the farcical elements in the film, the majority felt it was hampered by a bad script, hammy acting, and an editor asleep at this splicing machine. Members' rankings ranged from 2 to 7.5, with an average of 5.4, one of the lowest scores given by the Group this year.

"An extraordinary performance from Sandra Bullock!" was the unanimous conclusion from the Monday Film Group members, who met at the home of Jim Bennett on October 14th to discuss *Gravity*, a film with just two actors--Bullock as a medical engineer on her first mission in space, and George Clooney in a lesser role as a seasoned astronaut. (The voice of Ed Harris as "Houston" down on Earth is also featured.) Members commented on Bullock's uncanny ability to connect with the audience despite the fact she is encased in a space suit for much of the film and is able to communicate only through her eyes.

Accolades were also given to the cinematography, film editing, and in particular to the special effects. The sense of weightlessness is very effectively achieved, with several members commenting on one especially moving scene in which a tear slips off Bullock's face and floats gently into the void. The musical score elicited different reactions, with one member stating it was overpowering, while another likened it to Ravel's "Bolero," building in intensity, pulsating, so that you feel Bullock's anxiety (if not her terror) as she fights for survival. To describe this film as a nail-biter would be an understatement! Members described sitting on the edge of their seats throughout the entire 93 minutes of the film, with one member saying she frequently looked at her watch, not because the film was boring, but to see how much additional mental torture she had to go through before the movie ended, hopefully with Bullock intact. Some members thought that the crises Bullock faced were relentless, too many to be credible. All agreed that the role was an exceedingly challenging one, making extraordinary physical and emotional demands on the actress. All agreed that she will be a front-runner for the Best Actress Oscar this year. Members gave it an average rating of 9.1, one of the highest given by the Group to a film this year. The next meeting will be on Nov. 11th at the home of Abe and Vickie Feinberg at 1:30. *Reported by Dorena Knepper*



SCAARF REPORT

SCCARF's August epicurean excursion was to a tiny, hidden gem in Studio City: Mantee Café. A favorite hangout for the local Armenian/Lebanese community, Mantee is so popular that with no advertising it fills to overflowing every night. With 20 attendees, SCCARF indeed packed the house, leaving little table space for other diners. Seated on a patio, attendees ordered collaboratively, then shared tastes of a wide variety of unique dishes. Among the favorites were: fattoush, a salad of purslane, tomato, mint, cucumber, radish, sumac, and fried pita bread; bamia, a stew-like concoction of okra, tomatoes, cilantro and garlic; and mantee, the restaurant's signature dish of oven-baked ravioli filled with seasoned ground beef topped with a yogurt sauce. But the favorite by far was the filet mignon kebab, which one attendee declared was, "...the most tender, succulent kebab I've ever eaten." Though the eatery is inconspicuous and easily overlooked, having sampled its cuisine there is no doubt SCCARFers

will find their way to it again. (*Jim Dole*)

The group's September epicurean adventure was to Graikos, a small, family-owned neighborhood Greek restaurant in Porter Ranch. Thirty SCCARFers attended, packing three tables of ten, nearly filling the entire restaurant. One table began with a wonderful appetizer, saganaki—an imported kasseri cheese flamed at the table with brandy and served with pita bread. In Greek tradition, once the brandy is burned off, "OPAH!" is enthusiastically shouted. Graikos' website states that, "Each meal is made from scratch, prepared with only the freshest ingredients available, then presented to patrons immediately to preserve the delicate flavor and delightful aroma." Given the joyous noise level in the restaurant, SCCARFers enjoyed not just the food, but the company and the conversation as well! (*Dorena Knepper*)

On October 3rd, seventeen SCCARFers ventured a bit farther than usual to the Polka Polish Restaurant (<http://www.polkarestaurant.com>) at the border of Glendale and Eagle Rock. Polka and SCCARF proved to be a perfect fit: Polka sits in an unlikely little strip mall, is unpretentious and friendly, and serves uncommonly delicious, out-of-the-ordinary, food. Polka, we hear on good authority, is one of only two authentic Polish restaurants in the LA area, and our culinary experiences confirmed the high reviews it has garnered. Favorites included Kielbasa (sausage), Gulasz (beef stew), Golabki (stuffed cabbage), Bigos (Polish hunter stew), Pierogi (dumplings, in four varieties), Kotlet (breaded pork loin or chicken), and Ryba (salmon). All got high reviews from our diners: Bigos was especially singled out by lovers of sauerkraut. The menu also included Nalesniki (crepes filled with sour cherries and cheese, all sweet). Servings at Polka are so generous that most of us took home the left overs from our entrées and had no room to try the crepes. But those who did, including those who took *them* home, declared them delicious. (*Ron McIntyre*)



BOOKS AND READING

The **Wednesday Book Group** will be meeting on November 6th at 1:30 p.m. at Chris Smith's home. We will be discussing *Claire of the Sea Light* by Edwidge Danticat. There are no titles selected for December 4th. Please review titles listed below and bring additional titles to consider:

Seize the Day by Saul Bellow

Necessary Errors by Caleb Crain

And the Mountain Echoed by Khalid Hosseini

Editor's note: *Due to the lack of reports from our Book Groups for this issue of the newsletter, I am temporarily reviving my Suggested Reading column.*

The Invisible Bridge, by Julie Orringer. This long novel, which is a mixture of romance and history, deals with the life of a Hungarian Jewish architecture student in Paris in the late 1930's, his wooing of an older woman with a mysterious past, their marriage and return to Hungary, and the effects on them of the war and the Holocaust. The strong characterizations and the epic sweep of narrative keep the reader engrossed until the end, in spite of a few passages of "purple prose." We come to care about the people in this fictional world, from the major characters to those with walk-on parts.

Shadow of the Wind, Carlos Ruiz Zafon. This novel could be called gothic, or an epic, but above all it is a well-written narrative. Humor, horror, romance and politics are skillfully interwoven. First published in Spanish and Catalan, it is set in the author's native Barcelona in the years after the Spanish civil war, and was on the best seller list for many years. The novel opens in the Cemetery of Forgotten Books, where the hero, Daniel, is taken as a boy, and from there it takes off in directions too numerous to summarize—a wild ride that will keep the reader fascinated.

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ARF NOTES

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