We are living in a different world from the world we were in when I last addressed the membership in this space. Although the minutes of our March board meeting mention the possibility of cancelling our field trip to the Los Angeles Central Library, at the time I don’t believe we knew what we were in for: a world with new vocabulary such as sheltering in place, social distancing, quarantinis; new fashion styles: face masks and gloves to wear in public spaces; new workmates: our family members at home; and a new way of communicating: Zoom.

We have cancelled our last two signature events: the Memorial Awards Presentations, and our June General Meeting, the picnic where we socialize and elect our new executive board. We held our April 8th board meeting via Zoom with 12 of the 16 members present on screen. The Nominating Committee presented the new slate of board members which will be listed further on in ARF Notes. The Memorial Awards Committee chaired by Tim Fox presented the four recipients of our Memorial Awards, also detailed in ARF Notes.

The Executive Board, under the guidance of the Program Committee, has worked very diligently to provide programs for both for this year and for next. We are hoping for a return to face-to-face meetings sometime next year, but of course, all is in abeyance as we await further developments of COVID-19 and direction from our elected officials with advice from the expert medical community.

I want to thank the Board for all of its hard work this year, and for their flexibility in meeting under these new constraints. We as academics get used to adverse conditions, based on budgets, earthquakes, furloughs, and other misfortunes, and learn to adapt, and even to thrive under adversity. I am especially grateful to past presidents whose advice and good humor have made my job much easier. I welcome Tim Fox who will be our new President and lead us in these uncertain times. Tim is a mechanical engineer, a wine enthusiast, and a world traveller with his wife Phyllis Russell. He is also organized, energetic, and full of ideas. ARF will be in good hands.

As an English Professor, I have turned to literature not only for diversion, but also for solace and understanding at this time. As a Medievalist, I look to the far past first, Boccaccio’s Decameron in which 14th century sequestered story tellers entertain each other during the Black Plague; then to Geraldine Brook’s more contemporary Year of Wonder about the 1665 plague in Derbyshire, English. But the book that is especially telling for me right now is Albert Camus’ La Peste, The Plague. I read it in French as an undergraduate, but rereading it today is so much more chilling. Camus while describing the plague in Oran is no doubt referencing the Nazi infestation in France. However, in his talk at Columbia University in 1946, he refuses that oversimplification. He says, “It’s too easy ... simply to blame Hitler and say that the snake has been destroyed, the venom gone. Because we know perfectly well that the venom is not gone, that each of us carries it in our own hearts.” I hope that the events surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic looked at from a distance will find that we as human beings rose to the occasion, that we took care of each other, that we used this time to examine our societal structures that were shown to be weak and unjust for many of our fellow humans on this planet.

I hope to see many of you next year on our beautiful campus, perhaps in new surroundings, enjoying each other’s company and the programming we have put together. In the meantime, stay safe and be kind. As Mr. Rogers used to say, look for the helpers!

All the best, dear colleagues,

Pamela Bourgeois
Cost of Living Increases

CalPERS announced cost-of-living increases for 2020 at its March 17th, 2020 Board Meeting. These will appear in pay warrants or direct deposit notices beginning May 1st, 2020. For retirees from the the California State University System, the COLAs for 2020 will be as follows:

- For those who retired in 2004 or earlier: 2.00%
- For those who retired in 2005 through 2015: 1.81%
- For those who retired in 2016 through 2017: 2.00%
- For those who retired in 2018: 1.81%
- Those who retired in 2019 or later are not yet eligible for a COLA.

You can see the details of your deposit on your MyCalPERS page. Information from Mark Shapiro, CSUERFSA Webmaster.

Covid 19 and its impact on CSUN

As is the case with most other colleges and universities, the virus has had a profound effect on the day to day operations at CSUN, for an unforeseen period of time. Following are some extracts from President Dianne Harrison’s letter to the campus community on March 17th: “CSUN faculty are already planning to move instruction to virtual and alternate learning modalities on Monday, March 23rd, as we return from spring break and this... will be extended through the entirety of the spring semester. We are actively supporting the continued development of virtual learning and remote curricular delivery... For faculty, the Information Technology Keep Teaching webpage and the Faculty Development Teaching Through Disruption page provide helpful resources. Information Technology has developed additional tools for students. We are sharing options for Internet Connectivity for Users Who Do Not Have It.”

CSUN Library during the Campus Closure

The Oviatt Library is currently closed, with the employees working from home, and most are well prepared to “telecommute.” The campus has provided us with software that allows us to actually use the files and documents on our office computers—so it is almost like being on campus. The librarians are providing a whole range of virtual reference and instructional services. Collection development can, for the most part, continue as before, although receiving physical books is not so easy, especially since mail service on campus has slowed down. Reserves and interlibrary loan are trying their best to get everything that students and faculty need, and for the most part succeeding. The campus has set up a Device Loaner Program so that students without access to computers can check one out, free of charge. More information on this program can be found on the CSUN home page.

Of course, it is a great loss for our students not to be able to use the physical Oviatt Library. Despite the fact that 95% of our journals and half of our books are now online, there is nothing like studying in a real library, whether in groups or individually. We are all hoping to open up the Library to students and faculty as soon as possible, but as you know, this process will probably take several months because of public health concerns. Check the CSUN home page to keep up with the latest developments. Mark Stover, Dean, University Library.

ARF PROGRAMS

On Behalf of the Program Committee

We are looking forward to next year, and being able to resume our regular program schedule. We will engage optimistically in the possibilities for 2020-2021, and continue to plan. Please stay tuned and please continue to make suggestions for speakers, field trips, etc.!

In an email from the Program Committee, you might have seen an inquiry and request about the Silent Auction tradition, and its work in fundraising for the Graduate Awards program. We asked if we should continue it? Who might be interested in contributing the fruits of their artistry? (perhaps some of us are even more productive in the context of our all being at home...). And when should we have it? In November, before the holidays, or in January, at the Banquet—each has distinct advantages, but we’re looking for a consensus on a preference...if there might be one. Please send comments and suggestions to Sharon.klein@csun.edu.

But this year, 2019-2020, through the summer, we remain as we are, without these ARF events. Without a program to manage, what does a program committee do? We nose around in the areas that might be of interest to our members—some of whom may be grandparents, and all of whom are educators. At the request of some of my own family members (yes! they asked!), I put together some resources that I’ve discovered for parents—who
may be our children, and who may be working with their children - our grandchildren. You may already know of some of these resources. Some I discovered in the New York Times and other outlets, and some I stumbled on myself. These are just a very few… And if ARF Notes readers have suggestions, please send them to sharon.klein@csun.edu for publication in one of the occasional membership emails.

Scientific American Science Buddies:
https://www.scientificamerican.com/education/bring-science-home/

This resource has lots of at-home experimentation--with questions to be answered and science methodology itself to engage with, as well as some nifty “AHA!” moments to share…

BedTime Math:
http://bedtimemath.org/

The Common Sense Media folks like this one--I do, too! And…it’s an APP!

Book readings by celebritites: (you’ve probably heard about the former First Lady’s participation on the PBS one)

Storyline: https://www.storylineonline.net/library/
The PBS site: https://www.youtube.com/pbskids

Please be well, be careful, and keep in touch!

Sharon Klein, Program Chair.

2020 Memorial Awards Brunch -
Online this Year (minus food)!

ARF’s Memorial Awards recognize excellent scholarship and provide financial support for graduate student creative activities that are required as part of a master’s degree program. This year, applications were received from eleven departments across campus. Four awards of $2000 each were granted.

Normally, awardees are required to present their work at our annual Spring Memorial Brunch in May. In the absence of this year’s Brunch, due to COVID-19, we are presenting here the project abstracts of our four awardees, a short biographical sketch of each, and their answers to a couple of questions commonly asked by the audience at the Brunch.

Each awardee was asked the following questions:

What significant thing(s) have you learned while doing this project that might guide you in conducting future research in your field, or about your field in general?

Do you have any significant personal takeaways from undertaking this project that will influence your future work in your area, or in general?

Tim Fox, Awards Committee

Scholarship Awardees in alphabetical order:

Jennifer Fields (Biology); Advisor – Dr. Nyssa Silbiger

Jenn’s interests in marine ecology stemmed from frequent trips to the beach and Monterey Bay Aquarium as a young child growing up in the San Francisco Bay Area. Following graduation from Pitzer (a Claremont College) she worked with the US Fish and Wildlife Service as an AmeriCorps Conservation Scientist and Education Coordinator. She explored the environmental field through fishery science-related positions and as an environmental educator with “NatureBridge” in Yosemite. In graduate school at CSUN, she held leadership roles within the Women in Science and the Marine Biology Graduate Student Association. She also participated in educational outreach opportunities, such as Girls in Science and Technology, BUILD PODER, and elementary programs at Northridge Dearborn Charter Academy. Following her MS degree at CSUN, she plans to pursue fellowships, such as a NOAA Sea Grant and California State Fellowship programs, that combine these interests into a long-term career in conservation management. In her free time, Jenn enjoys trail running, backpacking, climbing, and adding new plants and animals to her iNaturalist profile.

Project title: “Cascading impacts of foundation species removal on ecosystem functioning within the Oregon rocky intertidal”

Foundation species are habitat-building organisms that enhance biodiversity and maintain functioning within their ecosystem. Within the rocky intertidal ecosystem, foundation species are expected to decrease in abundance with increased human impact. However, there is a need to better understand how foundation species loss will affect multiple facets of ecosystem functioning in concert. Using tide pools in coastal Oregon as a study system, I tested how the loss of mussels and surfgrass alter short-term light and temperature environments, community composition, biogeochemistry, and ecosystem metabolism (net ecosystem calcification [NEC] and net ecosystem production [NEP]) using a Before-After-Control-Impact experimental design in Summer 2019. My short-term results showed that foundation species loss caused immediate changes in ecosystem function. Specifically, temperature and light environments significantly increased, community composition and biogeochemistry significantly shifted, and NEC and NEP significantly increased in tide pools where we removed foundation species. The results of the study demonstrate the cascading changes that occur with intertidal foundation species lost, which may negatively impact the ecological services that these foundation species provide to coastal ecosystems.

Response to Questions:

During my project, I realized the parallels that exist
Project title: “The Malmos”

The Malmos is a hybrid sci-fi humor novel about a bad-ass teen mom, a closeted trucker, and a refurbished sexbot who inexplicably find themselves drawn together by their shared alien abduction experiences. They soon discover their experiences may make them the only ones capable of understanding a new alien enemy who comes to Earth disguised as toys for children. The Malmos is The Stand meets Roswell with the tone of Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy and some inspiration from Bladerunner. The Malmos is a modernist text with some postmodern elements, namely the fluidity of time and the overlapping multi-protagonists.

Response to Questions:

I have turned to many mentors and guides along the way toward completing my project. First and foremost, Professor Martin Pousson gave me insight into the Western/noir genre my novel situates itself and taught me how there is a form that every great story acknowledges and then steps away from. Dr. Christopher Higgs taught me how to use “triggers and hips” to build a compelling plot. Dr. Higgs also made me hyper-aware of how to elevate my prose by avoiding “be” verbs and gave me an awareness of the Aristotelian form from which to deviate. While conducting research for this particular novel, I’ve learned more than I ever expected to know about alien conspiracy theories and Christianity. These two things may not contribute to my future writing but doing the background work gave me a basis from which to conduct future research.

A significant takeaway that I gleaned from this project was how much my personal writing process has evolved. I used to consider myself what is known in the writing circles as a “pants” – writing from “the seat of one’s pants,” but now I am much more heavily in the “plotter” camp. I began this project before I enrolled in CSUN with the intention of completing it during the MA program. It started as a short story that came from a dream which I put to the page and submitted to literary magazines without much of a revision process. For whatever reason, the short story version of this text was short-listed by a high-ranking literary science fiction magazine called “Apex.” While ultimately rejected, the short-listing encouraged me to expand the story into a full novel. Without any guidance, I put streams of words to the page and inadvertently “pantseed” myself into a corner. However, once I had the knowledge and guidance of my professors, I ripped apart what I’d done and pieced it back together in different chunks. I invented new characters and perspectives through workshop exercises, and by allowing myself permission to fail, I ultimately hope to succeed in making a compelling piece of fiction.
This research has solidified my passion for coastal sciences and my goal is to make protecting and understanding our coastal environments a long-term career. I also have a greater appreciation for research as I now know the amount of time and effort it takes to see a project to fruition. I feel that as my research progresses, I will have a better understanding of exactly what I want my career and research after CSUN to look like.

Crystal Venegas (Psychology); Advisor – Dr. Meet Banerjee

Crystal Venegas was born and raised in the San Fernando Valley in California and received her BA from CSUN in 2018 with a double major in Psychology and Child Adolescent Development. She is currently a CSU pre-Doctoral Scholar at CSUN and has been awarded numerous awards and scholarships, including an NSF Research Fellowship to support her graduate studies through 2024. After completing her master’s degree in Clinical Psychology at CSUN, she will begin a doctoral program in Clinical Psychology at UCLA in fall 2020. She aspires to pursue a career in academia as a teacher, mentor, clinician, and researcher. When she is not studying and working on research related to Latinx mental health, she enjoys exploring the outdoors, reading, and spending quality time with her daughter and family.

Project Title: “A longitudinal Exploration of Socio-Cultural Factors on Mental Health in Latinx Youth to Emerging Adulthood”

The Latinx population is disproportionately at risk for depression. High levels of migration and minority related for stressors (MRS) like acculturative stress (AS) and perceived racial discrimination (PRD) have been associated with high levels of depressive symptoms in both youth and adult Latinx samples; and high levels of cultural resources, like familism, family cohesion (FC), and ethnic cultural identity have related to less depressive symptoms. However, such findings are from cross-sectional studies. Research is scarce in understanding these relationships over time. The current study examines how MRS and cultural resources influence depressive symptoms, from youth to emerging adulthood, among a Latinx sample from the Drug Use and Cultural Factors Among Hispanic Adolescents and Emerging Adults survey. As hypothesized, correlations demonstrate that high levels of AS and PRD are significantly related to high levels of depressive symptoms across time; and high levels of FC relate to low levels of depressive symptoms. Latent growth models demonstrate that AS significantly predicted depression baseline levels at all time points; and PRD significantly predicted baseline levels and overall rate of change. Findings highlight a need for culturally responsive preventions/ intervention efforts promoting positive

Erin Schmitt (Geology); Advisor – Dr. Priya Ganguli

Erin was born in Montana, but her family soon relocated to the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia where she was raised. She remained in Virginia to complete her BSc in Geology and Anthropology at James Madison University before moving to California for a job opportunity as a petroleum engineering technician. After five years in the workforce, she returned to graduate school to pursue her true passion of coastal sciences and is currently a first year MSc student in the Department of Geological Sciences. After graduation in May 2021, she hopes to gain employment in protecting and managing our coastal resources. In her free time, she enjoys drawing and painting, experiencing new places and food through travel, and swimming. When her schedule allows, she also plans to return as a volunteer to her local animal shelter.

Project Title: “Mercury Toxicity and Transport in a Remediated Coastal Lagoon Ecosystem: Malibu, CA”

Malibu Lagoon, CA, is impacted by urban contaminants, such as nutrients and metals. In 2012, the lagoon was remediated to reduce nutrient and sediment inputs and improve circulation. Post-remediation monitoring indicates lagoon conditions have improved, but heavy metal concentrations have not been evaluated. This is a concern because a 2009 study found that toxic, bioaccumulative organic mercury (CH3Hg+ or MeHg) concentrations were 20 times higher in the lagoon relative to coastal seawater. Although MeHg is produced by anaerobic bacteria, some reservoir and lake studies have documented elevated MeHg production in water columns that remained slightly oxygenated. I will characterize seasonal trends in inorganic and organic forms of mercury in the water column of Malibu Lagoon and evaluate how MeHg responds to oxygen levels so I can compare my results to lake systems. My overarching goal is to better understand how coastal remediation affects Hg toxicity. I hypothesize that MeHg concentrations will be highest during the dry season when a sand berm separates the lagoon from the ocean and oxygen concentrations are likely to be low. I anticipate MeHg production will be highest in slightly oxygenated water, similar to findings in lake systems.

Response to Questions:

My research experience at CSUN has shown me how much there is yet to learn about our local environment. The fact that high concentrations of mercury have been documented in an urban lagoon is concerning because it bioaccumulates through the food web into the food we eat, such as tuna. As a result, I would like to continue research on how coastal environments evolve and react to anthropogenic effects.
psychological adjustment from youth to emerging adulthood in Latinx communities and ethnic minorities alike.

Response to Questions:

Working on my thesis project was the first time I worked with data from multiple time points. It was a challenge to conduct certain analyses as some measurements of interest were not surveyed consistently across multiple time-points. Therefore, I had to be strategic about the variables and waves (years) of data that I used. I learned to be patient with the process of working with secondary data, as I have no control over the measures available nor if participants elect to participate in that particular wave of data collection. This process has shed light on how extensive and complex longitudinal research designs can be, which I will be more cognizant of as I endeavor in longitudinal data collection methods in my future research. Especially when it is well known that ethnic/racial minorities are less likely to participate in research and/or seize subsequent participation in longitudinal studies, otherwise known as attrition. Further, I have also learned more about the influence that migration/minority related stressors and cultural resources have on the development and trajectory of depression. It was essential to understand the factors that contribute to persistent psychological distress.

This project taught me about persistence and adaptability. When working with any project, it is important to have a plan as well as a contingency plan. I have worked on this project for the past year and have come to understand that proposals change, especially when circumstances arise that result in CSUN transitioning to remote learning and labs closing down. It is important to continue communication with thesis committee members to understand how to proceed with the project. I was fortunate enough to be working with secondary data (compared to peers that might have been collecting their own data), however, I relied on access to multiple statistical software and computers provided by my lab as well as in-person meetings with my mentors to advance and progress in my project. Due to this, I had to adapt and formulate a contingency plan in case I was unable to gain access to statistical software or meet progress reports. I have learned to remain positive and persistent in my journey to completing this project. This experience will shape my future as a scholar as I will ensure to have a contingency plan and be adaptive. Further, as an aspiring faculty member, I will make sure to be understanding of my student’s situations to ensure that students feel supported and are able to thrive when undertaking projects, especially milestone projects for a thesis and/or dissertation.

ARF 2020 Awards Review Committee:

Timothy Fox (chair), John Clendenning, Jim Dole, Gary Lobb, Virginia Lussier
ARF/Eisner College of Education/Phil and Shirley Hansen Memorial Scholarships

Since 2012, four scholarships have been awarded annually to CSUN students, made possible by a generous contribution in memory of Phil and Shirley Hansen to the Association of Retired Faculty and the Michael D. Eisner College of Education. To be eligible for these $2,500 scholarships, students must be enrolled in a degree or credential program in the College of Education during both the fall and spring semesters. Each year a committee of ARF and College of Education retired or FERP faculty reviews the applications and selects the recipients based on commitment to the chosen field, academic achievement, and financial need. Committee members for 2019-2020 scholarships included Pamela Bourgeois, Beverly Cabello, Richard Castallo, Bonnie Ericson (chair), Sharon Klein, and Vicki Sharp. In previous years, Larry Carrillo, Joyce Linden, Nancy Owens, Karen Robinnette, Christine Smith, and Joel Zeitlin have served on the committee. This year’s Scholarship Committee is pleased to introduce the 2019-2020 recipients.

Erum Asif is enrolled in the Secondary Education Accelerated Credential Teacher Program and is working toward a Single Subject Preliminary Credential in English. She taught English Literature and Composition in schools in her hometown of Karachi before coming to the United States, and graduated from UCLA with a major in English and a minor in Gender Studies. She views literacy and education as important tools for social justice, and hopes as an English teacher to empower her students for educational and life success.

Gabriel Cooper earned his B.A. in English at Northwestern University, and is a first generation high school and college graduate. He is now enrolled in CSUN’s Marriage and Family Therapy Master’s Program in the Department of Educational Psychology and Counseling (EPC). He has volunteered with Comfort Care Hospice and Camp Brave Trails, and has worked as an AIDS/HIV Test counselor at UCSF Alliance Health. Gabriel is the first student to earn a second ARF – Education- Hansen Scholarship.

Ana Maritza Rivera is enrolled in the BA program in the Department of Deaf Studies, where she has demonstrated remarkable leadership and advocacy skills. She participated in the CSUN Internship Program in Washington, DC, and is a member of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute. One of her letters of reference was written by Congressman Gil Cisneros, and though her internship was completed last year, she continues to volunteer in a variety of capacities through the congresswoman’s local office, including providing signing services for Deaf members of the community at some events.

Jar-El Almira Cruz earned her Single Subject K-12 music credential in 2011 at CSUN, and she is presently enrolled in Elementary Education’s Multicultural-Multilingual Master’s degree program. Jar-El has been teaching music in the Santa Monica Unified School District for the past seven years, and was recognized with their Outstanding Teacher Award. Last fall she was teaching 22 classes a week in seven different schools; these classes ranged from strings and choir to general music. She is currently working to develop a new mariachi class for 5th graders.

We congratulate these students, and wish them the very best in their professional endeavors. Bonnie Ericson.

June Picnic and Membership Meeting

Alas, no June picnic and meeting. I hope you are all eating well at home! One of the main events at the meeting is to introduce the slate of officers for the coming year for approval by the membership, so we submit this slate of officers for your virtual approval.

Nominating Committee: Timothy Fox, Pamela Bourgeois (Chair), Catherine Jeppson.

The committee recommends the following slate to serve on the ARF Executive Board in 2020/2021.

President: Timothy Fox (elected)
Vice President/President –Elect: John Clendenning (nominate)
Immediate Past President: Pamela Bourgeois (elected)
Secretary: Cheryl Spector (nominate)
Treasurer: Daniel Blake (nominate)
Program Chair: Sharon Klein (nominate)
ARF Notes Editor: Ann Perkins (nominate)
Membership Chair: Phyllis Russell (nominate)
Historian: Virginia Lussier (nominate)
Webmaster: Eugene Turner (nominate)
Member at Large: Shan Barkataki (elected) 1 year
Member-at-large: Leland Gassert (nominate) 1 year
Member-at-Large: Pat Nichelson (elected) 1 year
Member-at-Large: Cathy Jeppson (nominate) 2 year
Member –at-Large: Joel Zeitlin (nominate) 2 year
Member-at-Large: Bob Kiddoo (nominate) 2 year

From the Editor

We have taken a large part of this issue of ARFNotes to recognize and celebrate the accomplishments of our scholarship winners. In a time when everything is uncertain and somewhat frightening, it’s important to be reminded of why we chose this profession to begin with; no matter what is going on in the world, we are sending students out with fresh ideas and dreams, and the hope of making the world a better place.

The September issue will include interest group reports (and maybe some yet to come—on Zoom?) I would also like to encourage you to send reports of your activities, awards, research, and travels. Feedback from many members indicates how much they enjoy hearing about the activities of former colleagues. Send reports to: ann.perkins@csun.edu.

Stay safe and well!
ARF EXECUTIVE BOARD, 2019—2020

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ARF NOTES
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