

# ARF NOTES

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



## President's Message:

**Diane  
Schwartz**

As President of the Association of Retired Faculty, I try to attend all the **ARF** social events. This fall, I particularly enjoyed the Speaker events for September ( Jolene Koester) , October ( Pam Nagami) and November ( Art Shulman). These events were attended by **ARF** members and their guests. The talks were interesting, informative, and engaging. As always, it was an excellent opportunity to reconnect with friends and colleagues from the campus.

I hope to see all of you at our upcoming **ARF** events in January 2025 and Spring 2025. Many of the Speaker event attendees take the opportunity to have the brunch/lunch served in the Orchard Conference Center just before the talks. [The brunch/lunch costs \$20. and requires an RSVP.] Look for emails from our Program Chair, Patricia Miller, with details of upcoming events.

I would also like to remind you that we have a website, [www.csun.edu/arf](http://www.csun.edu/arf). This website contains useful information about our organization, including:

**ARF** Bylaws and Constitution

*ARF NOTES* ( newsletter)

Minutes of **ARF** Executive Board Meetings

An In **Memoriam Page** containing a list of deceased colleagues. Remembrance articles for deceased colleagues are published in our newsletter, *ARF Notes*.

Calendar for **ARF** events

Information about **ARF** Special Interest Groups

Contact list (email addresses) for members of the **ARF** Executive Board

Eugene Turner ([eturner@csun.edu](mailto:eturner@csun.edu) ) is our webmaster. If you are wondering about what is currently going on in **ARF**, check out our website or contact an Executive Board member.

Diane Schwartz

**ARF** President 2024-2025

*Editor's Note: In the last issue of the Newsletter, November 2024, I inadvertently used Diane's September president's message a second time rather than the November message which should have appeared. But Diane skillfully incorporated the most important elements of the November message into this message, so you've not missed too much. Thank you, Diane!*



## NEWS FROM CSUN

With the support of a \$5 million grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture Urban and Community Forestry Program, University officials and leaders of the Fernandeno Tataviam Band of Mission Indians plan to tap into the tribe's traditional ecological knowledge to establish nurseries and workforce development programs that focus on growing and planting culturally significant native trees. These programs will focus on low-income communities that are disproportionately burdened by multiple sources of pollution.

"As the caretakers of our native land in the San Fernando and Antelope Valleys, this grant will enable us to use our traditional ecological knowledge, in tune with current climate data, to bring back the forest and breathe new life into our communities," said tribal president, Rudy Ortega, Jr. "We will do this by engaging with our Elders, tribal citizens and other stakeholders to ensure that the trees that we plant are sustainable and resilient."

Cris Khachikian, a professor of civil engineering and construction management at CSUN and one of the project's leads, elaborated on the project's objectives. "Our efforts are geared towards enhancing the urban tree canopy, which is essential for cooling our cities and mitigating the effects of climate change in vulnerable communities. Centering traditional ecological knowledge in our project allows us to pursue goals of equity, sustainability, and the creation of meaningful workforce development opportunities for marginalized youth," he said. "Through urban forestry, we are not just addressing the pressing need for climate mitigation but are also nurturing a sense of cultural pride and environmental stewardship among the next generation."

While CSUN is taking the lead in the project, in close collaboration with the Fernandeno Tataviam Band of Mission Indians, communication stud-

ies professor Daisy Lemus emphasized that the project is designed to be collaborative — drawing not only on the skills and knowledge of tribal members and faculty, students and staff in disciplines across the University, but also on the talents of members of local governmental agencies and nonprofit organizations.

"This deliberate cooperation among the parties involved is a direct result of CSUN's sense of stewardship of place and strong alliances with key partners....," Lemus said. "We all coexist in a large urban region that is their ancestral home and encompasses CSUN's campus, a region that is also particularly susceptible to urban heat island effects, while also presenting sizable urban reforestation opportunities."

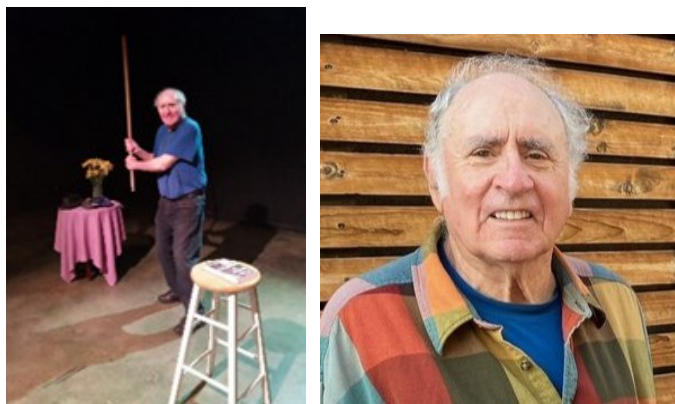
The Tribal Nursery and Tree Planting Project's goals include developing a regional network with partnerships that promote the benefits of native trees in the region; planting 750 trees in disadvantaged communities while engaging the community members in tree planting and maintenance education; and creating and implementing a nursery training program that includes academic workshops and symposia that focus on workforce development. The project's organizers also hope to leverage the created partnerships to promote knowledge sharing to increase workforce awareness and skills in urban forestry.

## **Program Committee Report,** By Pat Miller & Cynthia Desrochers

The year has flown by, 2025 is just around the corner and I am still looking for a 36-hour day at a 24-hour price to finish 2024 with a modicum of decorum. That said, and ever hopeful that Santa will deliver a bagful of extra nanoseconds, and certainly before the day gets the best of me, I would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a most delightful Holiday Season filled with peace and good cheer.

## **November 2024 Program**

On November 8th, 2024 the ARF Speaker Series year concluded with a most entertaining presentation titled: *Being 80: Too Old To Change?* a semi-comedic look at the life of Art Shulman.



Here is Art playing stickball in his semi-comedic solo show **AM I REALLY JEWISH?**

Art Shulman, a retired CSUN faculty member from the Marketing Department and **ARF** member, shared his one-man standup comedy routine with **ARF** membership and guests. This last program event for 2024 did not disappoint, Art was indeed delightful! The title of his act hinted that many of his stories would resonate with the listeners, and so they did.

In his humorous comedic monologue, Art recalls how on Monday he fills his plastic pill container for the week. You know the kind, it has seven compartments, and you apportion your pills for blood pressure, cholesterol, etc. Making the point that at 80, the days fly by at a continually escalating speed, the days roll into one and it feels like every day is Monday.

We chuckled when Art shared how to discover the meaning of life. He Googled it (!) to find that Life is a cereal made by Quaker Oats. In another story, Art relayed a trip to Jack-in-the-Box, ordering from the drive-through speaker. As with many of us, Art's hearing is becoming an issue. Although his hearing volume is okay, the clarity has deteriorated, requiring him to study the speaker's lips to comprehend. After three attempts to decipher the garbled speech coming out of the speaker box, Art drove up to the window, only to find the worker wearing a COVID mask covering his mouth.

Art suggests that we do change as we get older: we get wiser and more humorous, and we develop a willingness to be silly and stupid—which he charmingly illustrated throughout his act. When asked at his closing what was the meaning of life, Art responded: be productive and happy. Which Art clearly is.

He is also the author of the book *A Kid Grows in Brooklyn*, a biographical journey which takes you on a wonderful, nostalgic trip to Brooklyn as it once was,

a neighborhood we would all long for. His vivid descriptions allow us to taste the egg cream and pastrami, feel the thrill of punchball, and experience a thunderous ride at Coney Island. But it is the tender tales of youth, family and childhood friends that keep you turning the pages to experience it all. Different parts of the book are funny and touching. If you've known Brooklyn, you'll be happily reminded of days gone by. If Brooklyn is new to you, you may be inspired to visit. *Article submitted by; Patrizia Miller – Chair, ARF Program Committee 2024-2025.*

## **Upcoming events for January 2025 – June 2025:**

### **JANUARY 18th, 2025:**

The Soraya, CSUN, 3:00 pm matinee, ***Stomp, the Musical***. See the Link below for ticket purchase with 20% discount.

*ARF Promotional Code to STOMP, 1/18/25 @3pm*

There will be a Reception after the performance, at the Gallery at the Soraya, from 5 pm—6pm. We hope you agree that this will be a delightful way to start the New Year...good company, great performance, and cheer.

### **FEBRUARY 13th, 2025:**

Valentine's Day Lunch, Buon Gusto Ristorante.

[www.buongustoristorante.com](http://www.buongustoristorante.com). 15535 Devonshire St., North Hills, Ca.

Noon—3 p.m. More details to come including menu selections.

### **MARCH 14th, 2025**

ARF Speaker Series Resumes:

Panel Discussion, The CSU and ERFSA—what can they do for you? Speakers: Merry Pawlowski, Tim Fox, et al. See article on ERFSA on page 4. Location, Orchard Conference Center:

Noon—1, Brunch/Lunch

1:00—2, Panel Discussion and Q and A.



## APRIL 17th, 2025, ARF Field Trip

Norton Simon Museum, Pasadena, California  
Bus Transportation Provided, More details to come.  
Tentative time: 9 am—3pm.

## MAY 3rd, 2025, ARF Memorial Awards Brunch

Orchard Conference Center, 10am-2pm

## June 7th, 2025, ARF General Meeting and Picnic

CSUN Arbor Grill, 11am—2pm

## CSU-ERFSA

The California State University Emeritus and Retired Faculty and Staff Association (CSU-ERFSA) is a statewide not-for-profit corporation devoted exclusively to addressing the concerns and protecting the rights of all retired California State University faculty and staff. We work on behalf of the more than 9,000 retired faculty members from the 23 campuses of the California State University system, as well as on behalf of all retired CSU staff members and current CSU employees.

ERFSA's administrative headquarters are located on CSUN's campus ([csuerfsa@csun.edu](mailto:csuerfsa@csun.edu)). Each year CSU-ERFSA has a statewide Fall and Spring meeting at one of the CSU's campuses. CSUN will host the April 2025 ERFSA Spring meeting this year.

Here's a message from Merry Pawlowski, ERFSA Executive Director – "Please consider joining the statewide association, CSU-ERFSA, as well as your local affiliate (ARF), to maximize the impact CSU retirees can make on protecting CALPERS pensions and healthcare, while maintaining strong relationships with the chancellor's office, the state legislature, the statewide Academic Senate, and the CFA." For more information, go to [www.csuerfsa.org](http://www.csuerfsa.org).

*Tim Fox, ARF ERFSA Representative*



IN MEMORI-  
AM

## ARF Mini-Obits

We recently learned of the passings of the following CSUN faculty and staff we thought might be of interest to you:

**Betty Jo (B.J.) Mitchell (Library).** Emerita Assistant Director of the CSUN Libraries. B.J. worked at CSUN from 1967 to 1997, serving as Associate Director (Dean) of Libraries for 10 years. She was a member of ARF from her retirement in 1997 to her passing in 2017. She was 93. *Michael Barrett*

The following three remembrance articles were written by Cynthia Rawitch:

**Mary Ellen Etherington (Health Sciences).** Professor Emerita of Health Sciences, Dr. Etherington was one of the founders of CSUN's physical therapy program when the campus was Valley State, helping to shepherd it from a certificate to a degree. She passed away on July 2, 2024.

**Herbert W. Larson (Center on Deafness).** Former Director of CSUN's National Center on Deafness from 1979 to 1998 and a pioneer in deaf education, Herb was especially proud of his involvement in developing community programs for deaf youth. He passed away on March 19, 2024 from injuries sustained in a fall. He was 92.

**Robert C. Marshall (Archives).** An Archival Administrator at CSUN, Marshall was head archivist of the CSUN Urban Archives Center and the University Archivist from 1993 till his retirement in 2009. An expert in local history collections, Marshall passed away on Dec. 29, 2023. He was 74.



## BOOK GROUPS

### Wednesday Book Group

*One of Ours* is the second novel by Willa Cather that our group has read, both set primarily in rural and small town Nebraska. It won the Pulitzer Prize in 1923. Her earlier book, *My Antonia*, deals with the frontier period of the late 1800s, while *One of Ours* takes place during the 1910 decade.

This novel follows the protagonist, Claude Wheeler, from his life on the farm to his time in World War I. Claude is one of three sons in his farming family. He is a hardworking, naively earnest son who is obliged to take over the family farm. He doesn't want a farmer's life but doesn't know how to find a more satisfying life. Claude volunteers for the war. He discovers a wider world and larger roles for himself, but then faces brutal reality.

Cather's writing is clear, without pretension, and effective. She is known especially for her believable and full development of major and minor characters, which we enjoyed tremendously. She gives a perceptive and endearing picture of life on farms and small towns, and her attention to the natural world adds to the credibility of her novels.

Cather brings all her Nebraska people to life and handles the realities of war with poignance and depth. Several of us felt we had a window on the world of our parents and grandparents. We liked *One of Ours* a great deal and strongly recommend it. Readers who like Cather's work might want to dip into a biography by James Woodress, who taught English at San Fernando Valley State College in the early 1960s. His 1987 book is a balanced, detailed, and fascinating examination of Willa Cather's life, personality, talents, and writing.

We also discussed *The 100-Year-Old Man Who Climbed Out the Window and Disappeared* by Jonas Jonasson. This novel is the story of Allan Karlsson, who escapes his stifling retirement home and

the birthday party planned for him and goes adventuring in the countryside and small town Sweden. The story rolls along propelled by unlikely and amusing happenings and Allan's deadpan acceptance of whatever happens. Several incompetent police and a group of criminals are after him and his several new found friends.

There is also a back story of Allan's life wherein he meets many famous people and touches history, partly thanks to his love of vodka and explosions and his knowledge of explosives. For example, Karlsson ends up working as a waiter at Los Alamos in early 1945. J. Robert Oppenheimer is having a design problem. Karlsson suggests a solution, and we all know the result. Later, Karlsson meets through hardly believable circumstances and to some extent becomes drinking buddies with Harry Truman, Winston Churchill, Mao-tse Tung, and others.

The book seems to have Swedish in-jokes which we may or may not have gotten. The film based on the book is apparently the most popular Swedish film of all time. This was a cute and entertaining book. We all were happy to have a "time out" from our usual more serious books, and we enjoyed the book. *Jim Allen and Joel Zeitlin*

The **Wednesday Book Group** also discussed *My Brilliant Friend* by Elena Ferrante. This 2012 novel introduces us to two young girls in a poor neighborhood of Naples in the 1950s and covers their childhood and adolescence, while the next three books in the series called *The Neapolitan Quartet* continue the stories of their lives. The Quartet is also a series on HBO.

Elena, the narrator, is the best student in class and is drawn to a friendship with Lila, a rebellious classmate who learns how to read on her own and may be the smartest student in the class. Elena is intrigued by Lila and often follows her in dares and adventures. Both girls are also fully immersed in the lives of friends and families.

All the characters are distinctive, complex and not stereotypical. Although the mothers are mostly homemakers, the occupations of men include shoe maker, porter at city hall, railroad conductor and writer, grocer, and owner of a bar-pastry shop. Hard work is expected, especially to help the family, but

education is not widely seen as a way toward getting more money. Children sometimes visit other sections of Naples, and teenagers explore sex and young love with its rivalries and unknowns. Fortunately, with so many interacting characters, there is a handy listing in which all the important ones are shown by family.

We easily connected with the characters and social situations. Most of us felt this was a good novel, and one of us found the book so compelling that he will be reading the second in the series right away. One member watched the TV episodes instead of reading the book. *Jim Allen and Joel Zeitlin*

## SCIENCE BOOK GROUP

At the November 21<sup>st</sup> meeting of the **Science Book Group** we discussed *The Autumn Ghost: How the Battle Against a Polio Epidemic Revolutionized Modern Medical Care.* by Hannah Wunsch, 2023. Attendees were Adam Gifford, Martin Saiz, Elizabeth Trybus, and Heidemarie Lundblad.

We agreed that the book is very readable and, given our age group, brought back scary memories. However, it took a very long time (6 chapters!) before there was the first clue why the author chose to focus her discussion of polio on one hospital in Copenhagen, Denmark. The main item of real information content is the discussion of how an anesthesiologist invented positive pressure ventilation and thus made it possible to save thousands, perhaps millions of lives. At the time the only alternative was the iron lung which was not only very expensive but made proper care of patients almost impossible. Our review of the book and polio also covered the invention of vaccines and eventually led to a brief discussion of the proposed head of the Department of Health and Human Services who is a crusader against vaccines. *Heidemarie Lundblad.*

Three members of the group met in December to discuss *The Drunkard's Walk*, but considering the low attendance we decided to postpone discussion of the book until the January meeting. The

book proposed for discussion in February is *Nexus: A Brief History of Information Networks from the Stone Age to AI.* *Martin Saiz*



## SCCARF REPORT

In October, our SCCARF group spent a fun and delicious evening at Anarbagh Indian Restaurant in Woodland Hills, to which we were returning for the first time since the pandemic. The food, as always before, was superb: specifically cited were the tandoori chicken, the masalas (unusual, as prepared with coconut milk), and the parmesan and the garlic naans. Attendees praised the wait staff for providing exceptional service. As always, the conversations were warm, interesting, and stimulating – enjoying the company is the highlight of every SCCARF event! Comments included: “loved the food, loved the comraderie!”, “comfortable surroundings”, “extraordinary service”, “great conversation – Books! Travels! Religion! Families! Grandkids!”, “let’s return!”. – *Ron McIntyre*

On Tuesday, November 12th, 16 SCCARFERS gathered at Ali Baba Persian Restaurant in Granada Hills, enjoying a delicious meal and a fun time revisiting a restaurant that was on the SCCARF “rotation” a few years ago.

As one of our attendees noted on the evaluation form: “Good food, good service. Lots of fun & great conversation.” Said another, “Portions are huge.” (There’s not much more you can ask of an evening out.) Singled out for special praise was the restaurant’s justly famous sour cherry rice. And those who added the Persian ice cream for dessert loved the unusual rosewater, pistachio and saffron treat.

SCCARF had the restaurant’s second room all to itself, making it more like a party atmosphere. The two young women who served us were excellent and accommodating.

Hope more **ARF** members can join us in the future! *Cynthia (and Bob) Rawitch, November SCCARF hosts*



## FILM GROUP

The **Monday ARF Film Group** met remotely on November 4, 2024, via Zoom to discuss the films *Thelma* and *Coup!*

*Thelma* is a unique ride, mixing humor, suspense, and a touch of absurdity as it follows an unlikely heroine, a senior citizen determined to recover her \$10,000 from online scammers. The film's charm lies in its protagonist's grit and ingenuity, but the story takes some unexpected turns that test the limits of believability, particularly in an extended electric scooter chase sequence that feels more fantasy than reality. The electric scooter scenes stretch plausibility. However, watching June Squibb, who is actually in her 90's, joyfully portraying Thelma was a pleasure. Thelma chases down the scammers over a lengthy cityscape on a device not built for actual highway travel and endurance. This was just fun to watch for all of us. Our film group gave it an average rating of 7.6/10.0, with scores ranging from 7.0 to 8.5.

*Coup!* Is a dark comedy where a man pretending to be a cook manages to get hired by a wealthy family on an isolated estate at the time of the Spanish flu and inspires a small rebellion with the other servants. Overall, this film was not well-liked by the group. Several members felt it was slow, boring, and lacking likeable characters. Some did say it was better at the end and one member thought it had some historical value. Just one member liked it, feeling it gave social commentary on the hypocrisy of well-off liberals who propret to empathize and deal fairly with those who work for them. Our film group gave it an average rating of 6.8/10, with individual scores ranging from 6.0 to 8.0. *Submitted by Wendy Snyder and David Schwartz*

The **Monday ARF Film Group** met again on December 2, 2024, via Zoom. The Group dis-

cussed the films *The Remarkable Life of Ibelin* and *His Three Daughters*

*The Remarkable Life of Ibelin* delivers an intriguing and surprising narrative that rewards patience, but it's not without some challenges. The film weaves an intricate story about the hidden video game life of severely disabled Ibelin. The nonlinear structure and densely layered storytelling can make it difficult to follow at times, requiring viewers to pay close attention. Additionally, it assumes a baseline understanding of role-playing games, which may leave some viewers a bit puzzled about the detailed mechanics of what they are seeing. Despite this, the emotional payoff and the depth of the film was worthwhile to watch, especially for those who enjoy piecing together complex tales. The fact that it showed the possibility of a person with severe handicaps using role playing games to fully interact with others was a great thing to see. Our film group gave it an average rating of 8.6/10.0, with scores ranging from 6.0 to 9.5.

*His Three Daughters* is an emotionally charged drama that captures the complexities of the relationships between three siblings in the face of their father's pending death. Set almost entirely within the confines of a family apartment, the film relies on strong performances and sharp dialogue to convey the tension and unresolved conflicts between the sisters. While the first half felt slow and lacking in clarity, the narrative gains momentum in the second half, revealing the deeper layers of the relationships between the sisters. Despite their differences and simmering resentments, the story culminates in a moving resolution as the sisters come together through their grief and rediscover the bonds that tie them. It is a powerful exploration of family dynamics, offering raw and relatable moments that might be relatively uncommon in their severity among most families. One point is that in the final scene in which the dying father emerges and gives a somewhat irrelevant and possibly imaginary speech, seemed out of place to some of us. Our film group gave it an average rating of 8.0/10, with individual scores that were ll 8.0.

For the month of January 2024, the group plans to discuss *Joy* on NETFLIX and *Didi* on PRIME DEMAND (\$5.99) *Submitted by David Schwartz*



## **ARF EXECUTIVE BOARD, 2024—25**

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## **ARF NOTES**

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