

ARF NOTES

Publication of the Association of Retired Faculty
California State University, Northridge



VOLUME 37 no. 5

March 2025

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



President's Message: Diane Schwartz

First, I hope that all of you who suffered losses in the Los Angeles fires are safe and on the road to recovery. Our community wishes the best for you in the future. It was a very unsettling and distressing time for everyone, but especially for those in the path of the fires.

It is near the end of February. This means that we are preparing our election slate for the officers for the 2025-2026 **ARF** Executive Board. The officers will be elected by majority vote at the annual meeting of the Association of Retired Faculty in June 2025. The following positions are up for election: President-elect, Secretary, Treasurer, Program Chair, Membership Chair, ARF Notes editor, Historian, Webmaster, and three Members-at-Large. The **ARF** Nominating Committee is preparing a list of candidates for each of the offices. At the annual meeting, names of additional consenting **ARF** members may be proposed.

What **ARF** events are planned for Spring 2025?

In **March**, there will be a brunch/lunch followed by a panel discussion with Merry Pawlowski, Executive Director of ERFSA

(CSU Emeritus and Retired Faculty & Staff Association);

In **April**, **ARF** takes a field trip to the Norton Simon Museum, bus transportation provided;

In **May**, the **ARF** Memorial Awards Brunch will be held, in person this time;

In **June**, we will gather for the **ARF** Annual Meeting and Picnic.

More information about these events can be found on page 3 of this newsletter, and notices will also be sent out by the Program Chair. I hope you will attend one or more of these events. They are always a good time to reconnect with old friends and colleagues and the CSUN campus.

Diane Schwartz

ARF President 2024-2025





NEWS FROM CSUN

Faculty Senate Report

The **CSUN Faculty Senate** met by zoom on February 13 from 2:25 - 5:10 pm. Reports, discussions, and actions were focused on the following areas:

Impact of recent **Southern California Wildfires**. President Beck reported that some 500 faculty members and at least 400 students were directly impacted by the recent Altadena and Pacific Palisades wildfires. Homes of 17 CSUN campus employees were destroyed. The campus provided several emergency relief efforts through a variety of programs, especially for emergency living cost grants and housing assistance. The Counseling Center provided several support sessions.

Federal Government Priority Shifts. President Beck discussed the current state of chaos characterizing relations and connections between higher education and the Federal Government. A steady flow of orders and directives are being promulgated by different Executive Agencies; many of the mandates are contradictory, provide little clarification or implementation recommendations, and in several cases are rapidly rescinded. Areas under continued assault include: diversity, equality, and inclusion efforts, grant application and processing, transexual rights, and the continued existence of the Department of Education. A Convening of the (CSUN) Campus faculty Leadership was held on February 18th to focus on an extensive update by President Beck and discussions on key policy shifts and their projected impact on teaching and learning.

Reductions in **State Budget Support**. Both President Beck and Provost Komarraju reported on 2025/2026 projected state budget support for the CSU. A systemwide 7.95% reduction (\$375 MM), which translates into a \$26.4 MM reduction for CSUN, is likely. Previously instituted cost reduction efforts and campus reserves should cover most

of the CSUN reduction for 2025/2026. Because CSUN is one of 4 CSU campuses whose enrollment came in over target (1.7% for CSUN) the statewide required reduction for CSUN is partially offset by addition funds for above target enrollment.

Youth Programs Audit. VP Donahue reported on the results of the recent audit of CSUN youth programs. The report recommended several improvements concerning program governance and operation. In response, the campus is developing an interim policy for the time being, which includes publication of program guides, training programs, and a website dedicated to CSUN Youth Programs.

Resolution. The Senate reviewed and passed a CSUN Faculty Senate resolution on Institutional Support and Advocacy for Undocumented Students. *Reported by Michael Barrett*

CSUN/NASA Partnering

Every day for decades, NASA satellites have been collecting data about oceans and continents around the world, data that CSUN environmental geographer Mario Giraldo says will provide valuable information about how climate change is impacting Southern California.

Giraldo is partnering with NASA and the Jet Propulsion Laboratory and enlisting the help of a team of undergraduate students to mine through more than 20 years of “big data,” looking for insights into how rapidly warming ocean waters are changing the region’s environment. “Big data” is when you have so much data that it gets hard to work and process it,” said Giraldo, who teaches in the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences.

“The students are going to help us figure out what that impact is. They are going to help us sort through the data, figure out the right questions we should be asking, then help us look for answers and to develop a plan to communicate the findings to the public.”

Furthering the understanding of the impact of climate change on the West Coast, the project is designed to provide research mentoring opportunities for students across CSUN’s campus, not just geography majors.

“The students will truly be project team members,

making contributions to the research while working alongside JPL engineers and scientist with Ph.Ds.," Giraldo said. "They will be taking the lead in some of the data processing and analysis. The goal is to empower them and providing them with the career development opportunity so they can succeed in whatever career path they ultimately choose whether they go on to become researchers and academics, or choose a career in business, education or communications."

Soraya Performing Arts Center

Looking for an evening out without a long freeway drive? The Soraya Performing Arts Center at CSUN offers a wonderful variety of performances and events right here on our campus. Coming soon are Mexico's Ballet Folklorico (March 14 and 15) and the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra (March 27). Looking further ahead, on May 14 Diana Krall, noted jazz artist, will be performing as part of a nationwide tour. Some of you may have joined an **ARF** group on January 18th when we enjoyed *Stomp, the Musical*, which included a reception with light appetizers. **ARF** schedules at least one of these events a year, so watch the *ARF Notes* and your email for an announcement. For a complete schedule, information about parking, and how to reserve tickets, look online under **Soraya Performing Arts Center Northridge**.

The following are excerpts from Soraya's executive and artistic director Thor Steingraber's interview with Bob Howell of *Ventura Blvd. Magazine*:

There's no pigeonholing The Soraya. Classical? Sure. Chamber? Of course. Jazz? Lots of it. Dance? Twyla Tharp's troupe is on the way. So is Ballet Folklórico de México. Big philharmonic orchestras, intimate evenings with singers and instrumentalists, a mariachi opera, a trilogy honoring endangered California trees, a virtuoso mandolin player rocking Vivaldi. Performances in Spanish. Performances in English. Performances that transcend language.

"It's important to us as stewards of a community," says Thor, "to celebrate the richness and the diversity of the Valley. CSUN is one of the three largest Hispanic-serving institutions in the United States. It was clear to me when I came to The Soraya that that would be one of our priorities. And that audience *loves* being at The Soraya."

Which leads to Thor's guiding principle when it comes to The Soraya's programs: "They're all a vehicle for community," he says. "What's most interesting to me is bringing people together for a positive experience. When you come to a show, you set all differences aside. To share an armrest with a stranger can be a profound experience when you're getting lost in, immersed in, a concert or performance."

Program Committee Report – By Pat Miller

The start of 2025 proved quite stressful for LA, it is my hope that you all escaped the fires and rain, and that you and your families are safe.

Upcoming Events: Save the dates early and plan on joining us!

Friday, March 14, 2025, the ARF Speakers Series and Brunch/Lunch resume at the OCC from Noon till 2:30 pm. The presentation will be a panel discussion on the relationship between ARF and ERFSA. Our guest speakers will be Merry Pawlowski joined by our very own Tim Fox.

April 17, 2025 – ARF's annual field trip will be to the Norton Simon Museum in Pasadena. The trip is planned from 11:00 am till 3:30 pm. Transportation via coach has been secured. We are grateful to Councilman John Lee's office for facilitating the free bus. For those with mobility issues, the Museum has a limited number of wheelchairs for use by visitors on a first-come, first serve basis. These can be requested at the Admissions Desk or at the Coat Check desk, located on the entry level. Visitors are also welcome to bring their own wheelchairs. All public areas between the two levels of the Museum are accessible by elevator, and include ADA-compliant restrooms. We are currently working on lunch options, more details to come via email.

May 3, 2025 – ARF Memorial Brunch – 10:00 am – 2:00 pm at the Orchard Conference Center. Please be sure to mark your calendars for this important **ARF** tradition.

June 7, 2025 – ARF General Meeting and Picnic – 11:00 am – 2:00 pm – CSUN Arbor Grill. Stay tuned for more details to come.

Reports from previous Programs

January 2025:

On January 18, 2025, a group of 16 **ARF** theatre aficionados attended The Soraya matinee performance of 'Stomp, the Musical' which was followed by a delightful reception facilitated by The Soraya staff and catered by the OCC. The reception was held at the Soraya's Gallery. A good time was enjoyed by all and the 'Stomp' music had us keeping the beat.

Stomp was created by Luke Cresswell and Steve McNicholas, and it is an unforgettable experience for audiences of all ages. Our attendees certainly agreed with this assessment! The performers used every possible, unconventional prop as percussion instruments – who knew that matchboxes, wooden poles, brooms and broom handles, garbage cans, Zippo lighters, hub-caps, and yes, even plastic bags could be used to fill the Soraya venue with out of this world rhythms. The performance was mesmerizing and as the San Francisco Chronicle stated: "STOMP can't be beat! Infectious, inventive pulse-pounding entertainment! A roaring good time!" I certainly cannot express the delight of those present any better than this.



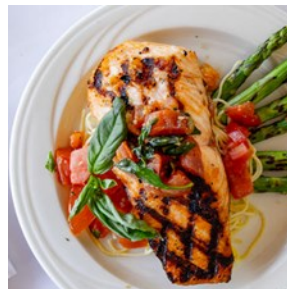
February 2025:

ARF Valentine's Day Lunch – February 13, 2025

A contingency of twenty-four **ARF** members joined

together to celebrate Valentine's Day at *Buon Gusto Ristorante* on Thursday, February 13, 2025. The occasion was festive, the conversation lively, the menu 'delizioso' and the libations spirited. The consensus from attendees was that the restaurant was on point and that we would revisit it for future **ARF** events.

Buon Gusto is a charming, unpretentious, though well-appointed eatery located at 15535 Devonshire Street in Mission Hills. Their menu is extensive and well curated with the chef using fresh, imported ingredients in preparing traditional Italian dishes. The restaurant was established in 1993. In 2008 an electrical fire had the owners closing their doors for a full year. By the spring of 2009, when construction was almost completed, they contacted their old employees to ensure an attentive workforce. To their amazement, every one of the employees returned to *Buon Gusto* to be a part of a small, family-owned establishment that stayed true to the goal of serving delightful food at a fair price. That was certainly our experience as we lunched on grilled salmon, sole piccata, chicken Marsala and more.



From my very Italian perspective, I was impressed by the pasta being perfectly cooked 'al dente'.

Reported by Pat Miller,

Chair,

ARF Program Committee

Emeriti Activities

Jay Christensen (Management) recently completed his so-called "community service" by attending and judging at the Regional Boardgaming Convention, Gateway, at LAX Hilton. At least 2,300 attended one of three regional conventions, and Jay judged *Talisman* and *Ticket to Ride: Rails and Sails* for two of the four-day convention. At the convention, in addition, some 800 games were played, including role playing, miniatures, and video games (especially *Artemis* about space travel). The convention is geared around families and diversities of all kinds. Jay remembers the days when he sponsored and started Simulation Gamers' Associa-

tion on the CSUN campus years ago.

Dr. Jay has also become involved in the Mark Twain Circle Programming Committee. The Committee is devoted to working with academics and lay people to bring the voice of Twain through seminars, Web sites, and presentations to people throughout the world, now including India. Jay's interest in Twain was sparked by coordinating 14 weeks of Mark Twain: Voice of the Gilded Age and Father of American Literature for the Plato Society of L.A. several months ago. Jay is currently taking the Films of Woody Allen Study Discussion Group (SDG) at Plato.



IN MEMORIAM

We recently learned of the passing of **Rita Streimer**, surviving spouse of Psychology Professor Emeritus Irving Streimer, who died in 2008. Rita was very active in **ARF** and was a continuing member till her death in February 2025. Mrs. Streimer, who taught quilting for many years through LAUSD and Pierce College, was a member of the San Fernando Valley Quilt Association and of the Valley Modern Quilt Guild. Her students loved her and were honored with several small quilt shows displaying their works. She was a Friend of the CSUN Library and she donated one of her quilts to the University, displayed in the Library *Cynthia Rawitch*



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.

One of Ours 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.

Over a year ago we 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 reading, and we enjoyed the book.

In February 2024 we discussed the historical novel *The Fraud* by Zadie Smith. The book centers around a famous 19th-century trial of an obviously fraudulent Claimant of the identity of Sir Roger Tichborne, a wealthy nobleman lost at sea.

The book gets to the trial of the Claimant after a long beginning devoted to the central character, Mrs Eliza Touchet, the housekeeper of her distant cousin, Sir William Ainsworth. Sir Ainsworth is a bumbling, untalented wealthy author. Eliza is intimately connected to Sir Ainsworth and both of his wives and serves as our eyes to see the condition of women, class and racism in England. Also, just for fun, there is a thorny literary scene with Dickens, Cruikshank and Thackeray. Sir Ainsworth, Eliza and the Claimant are all based on historical figures.

The public happily sympathizes with the Claimant as a man of the people in a caricature of current populism. There are audaciously self-promoting lawyers, a credible and proper black manservant whose sympathetic history is uncovered by Eliza, not to mention a public airing of the trial that dominates public attention.

Our group was pleased by the complexity and multifaceted reach of the book. It was hard to say that the book was just about one or two things. Everyone is a fraud in their own way. The prose is brilliant, and the characters are fascinating. The evasions and coercions of language about racism and class are brilliantly executed. Almost all of us liked the book, though a few of us found the abrupt shifts of time period over decades an impediment to keeping track of the story. We are considering reading another of the author's books. *Joel Zeitlin and Jim Allen*

ARF Science Reading Group

Zoom Meeting Date: January 15, 2025, 1:30pm

Attendees: Sandra Jewett, Martin Saiz and Adam

Gifford

Agenda:

After welcome by Sandra Jewett, the discussion centered on the resignation and replacement of Heidemarie Lundblad as chair of the **ARF** Science Reading Group. Martin Saiz volunteered to be the group's new chair, and to assume responsibilities for taking and publishing minutes, setting the meeting agendas, and managing the group's schedule and reading pipeline.

Discussion of this Month's Book Selection:

This month's reading was *The Drunkard's Walk: How Randomness Rules Our Lives* by Leonard Mlodinow, published in 2008. The book discusses the role of randomness in everyday events, and the cognitive biases that lead people to misinterpret random events and stochastic processes. Mlodinow discusses the contributions of mathematical notables including Jacob Bernoulli, Galileo Galilei, Pierre-Simon Laplace, and Blaise Pascal, as well as lesser-known amateur mathematicians like Pierre de Fermat, ministers like Thomas Bayes and famous gamblers like Gerolamo Cardano and Joseph Jagger. Mlodinow introduces basic statistical concepts such as regression toward the mean, the dueling laws of large and small numbers, and how to adjust expectations in light of past events or new knowledge, while discussing the role of probability in examples from wine ratings and school grades to political polls. We also learned how an English cotton factory engineer discovered how to beat the roulette wheels in Monte Carlo.

Our next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, February 19th at 1:30pm. We will be reading and discussing *Nexus: A Brief History of Information Networks from the Stone Age to AI (2024)* by Yuval Noah Harari.

Also important is a discussion of future readings. Please email your suggestions to Martin Saiz at martin.saiz@csun.edu. Please also send me your preferred email address. Here are some possibilities for future reading:

1. *You Are Here: From the Compass to GPS, the History and Future of How We Find Ourselves*, by Hiawatha Bray
2. *Mosquito*, by Timothy C. Winegard

3. *The Selfish Gene*, by Richard Dawkins
4. *The Rational Optimist*, by Matt Ridley

Reported by Martin Saiz



FILM GROUP

The **Monday ARF Film Group** met remotely on February 3, 2025, via Zoom. The Group discussed the films *The Substance* and *Juror #2*.

The Substance is actually a horror film that ambitiously tries to blend terror with thought-provoking themes yet ultimately fails in its execution. Demi Moore's acting was excellent but the movie's final act, in which Demi Moore's character transforms into a grotesque monster, is particularly jarring. The transformation feels overly sensationalized, detracting from the more fundamental ideas the film attempts to explore. Dennis Quaid delivers a standout performance as the obnoxious TV producer, injecting his character with a mix of humor and repulsion that anchors many of the film's more outlandish moments. His portrayal provides a welcome contrast to the otherwise dark and brooding tone of the movie, offering a glimpse of levity amidst the chaos. *The Substance* is a mixed bag: it captivates with moments of raw horror and some memorable performances, yet it falters in its narrative ambition and thematic execution. Fans of horror might appreciate its bold stylistic choices, but those looking for a cohesive exploration of life's inevitable decline may find it ultimately unsatisfying. Our film group gave it an average rating of

6.6/10.0, with scores ranging from 4.0 to 8.0.

Juror #2 is a courtroom drama that delves into the murky waters of guilt and moral ambiguity, albeit with mixed results. At its core, the film centers on its main character, *Juror #2*, whose internal conflict, and hidden guilt drive much of the narrative's tension. Nicholas Hoult delivers a compelling performance as *Juror #2*, a reserved and conflicted man haunted by past misdeeds. His portrayal captures the internal struggle of a man torn between duty and remorse, making his character one of the film's most intriguing aspects. Opposite him, Toni Collette shines as the prosecutor, a principled and determined figure who has difficulty letting go of the verdict which she knows is wrong. Despite these strong individual performances, the film is hampered by a sluggish pace that might test the patience of its audience. The portrayal of the jury's dynamics lacks the natural ebb and flow one might expect in such a high-stakes environment, reducing some of the emotional impact of the unfolding drama. The film's exploration of *Juror #2*'s hidden guilt leaves viewers with an unresolved conclusion that can be frustrating. Although *Juror #2* boasts strong lead performances, its slow pacing and unrealistic jury scenes detract from its overall impact. The film's open-ended conclusion, centered on the nature of guilt, may resonate with some viewers while leaving others yearning for a more definitive resolution. Our film group gave it an average rating of 7.5/10, with individual scores ranging from 7.0 to 8.0.

For the month of March 2025, the group plans to discuss *Radical* (on PRIME) and *Conclave* (\$5.99 on PRIME DEMAND)

Submitted by David Schwartz

SCCARF REPORT

The group did not meet in January or February, but will be gathering at Los Toros on Tuesday, March 11 at 6:30 pm! Hope to see you there.
Sandy Jewett

ARF EXECUTIVE BOARD, 2024—25

President	Diane Schwartz diane.schwartz@csun.edu	<u>Members-at-Large:</u> Michael Barrett michael.barrett@csun.edu
Past President and President Elect	Cynthia Rawitch cynthia.rawitch@csun.edu	Cynthia Desrochers cdesrochers@csun.edu
Secretary	Patrick Nichelson pat.nichelson@csun.edu	David Fox fox471@att.net
Treasurer	Catherine Jeppson catherine.jeppson@csun.edu	Bob Kiddoo robert.kiddoo@csun.edu
Program Chair	Patricia Miller patricia.miller@csun.edu	Sharon Klein sharon.klein@csun.edu
Membership Chair	Tim Fox tim.fox@csun.edu	Stephen Stepanek sgs@csun.edu
Newsletter Editor	Ann Perkins ann.perkins@csun.edu	<u>Web Master</u> Eugene Turner eugene.turner@csun.edu
Historian	Daniel Blake daniel.blake@csun.edu	

ARF NOTES

ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED FACULTY

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE

P.O. BOX 280578

NORTHRIDGE, CALIFORNIA 91328