SJSU ERFA News, Fall 2023

San Jose State University, Emeritus and Retired Faculty Association

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President’s Message:

An Opportunity Not to Be Missed

By Elaine Collins

Greetings! I am honored to be serving as the President of ERFA for this academic year. I retired from the College of Science at the end of 2020, during the pandemic. I had originally been planning on retiring and entering the FERP program about now, but with the birth of my first grandson in September 2020 and all the disruptions during the early stages of the pandemic, it seemed better for our family and for me to take advantage of President Papazian’s Early Exit program.

I was aware of ERFA because of my long-time friendship with Steve Branz and his involvement with the organization. When I first retired, University work and my new grandson kept me busy. I knew that I wanted to be more involved in ERFA in the future, though. When Joan Merdinger, in Spring 2022, asked if I was willing to be nominated as Vice President and President-elect of the Association, I was surprised but pleased. Joan had been very helpful to me as I was going through the tenure process, and she is very persuasive. She told me that it was very important to retire “to something” and not just retire “from something”; I am still working on what that means to me. In the meantime, I have spent the past year learning more about this great organization and the wonderful people that are involved in it.

In this past year, we have been able to move some of our events back to “in-person,” including our Holiday Lunch and our May business meeting, and this fall we will be reinstituting our in-person Fall Excursion. The Program and Activities Committees, chaired by Carmen Sigler and Lonna Smith, respectively, have been very busy planning our fall events, including an excursion to the San José Buddhist Temple combined with a visit to the San José Japanese American Historical Museum on October 26. We hope you can join us. Watch for more details coming soon. They are also planning our in-person Holiday Celebration in December.

Committee members are also working on a virtual presentation, possibly on Artificial Intelligence, in November. Our film group has been meeting virtually each month to discuss movies with Karl Toepfer, Chair of the Film Committee. He has great insights into the films we have watched so far. The next film discussion will be October 24, film TBD. One of our members from Hawaii joined us this past month. The pandemic has taught us how to connect virtually, enabling even those of you who have moved out of the local area to participate in some of our programs.

Are you interested in seeing how our Board works or in becoming more involved with the Board or our committees? Please contact me, at elaine.collins@sjsu.edu, or anyone on the Board, for more information.

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Mark Your Calendar!

Excursion to the Japanese American Historical Museum and the San José Betsuin Buddhist Church
October 26, 10 am to noon, optional lunch to follow
Cost without lunch: $10
Watch for details and RSVP
The Cybernetic Systems Program at SJSU
By William J. Reckmeyer

In the mid-1960s, as the region around San José began morphing from the Valley of Heart’s Delight into what subsequently became known as Silicon Valley, San José State launched an ambitious new interdisciplinary graduate program – the Cybernetic Systems Program (CSP) – to prepare people for working in America’s increasingly technological society. The CSP was a pioneering educational endeavor at the time, one of the first two degree-granting programs in the world that combined the emerging fields of cybernetics, systems, and computers to focus on a growing variety of complex socio-technical problems in more integrative and collaborative ways. The entrepreneurial driver of the program was Norm Gunderson, SJS’s visionary Dean of Engineering (1956-1970) during most of the period when the campus was transitioning from a small State College into a leading member of the California State University system. The CSP was initially housed in the Office of Graduate Studies from 1967-1976, after which it became part of the College of Social Sciences, merging with the Department of Anthropology in 1987. Although it was very successful in terms of academic innovation as well as student enrollments, significant budgetary woes in the College of Social Sciences during the 1980s led the SJSU administration to phase out the program in the early 1990s.

I was fortunate to spend the first 15 years of my career at SJSU as a faculty member in the Department of Anthropology and Director of the CSP before it was closed, and I always intended to record the Program’s history while it was still reasonably fresh in my mind. But new responsibilities intervened, and I never did. Now, thirty years since the CSP’s closure, I have decided to pull together its story while I can still do so. Fortunately, along with my own memories and records, I was able to locate enough archival materials in SJSU’s Department of Anthropology and in the Special Collections of the SJSU Library to proceed. During the past 15 months, I’ve completed a polished draft of an article about the CSP, and I’m also planning to write a piece about Norm Gunderson. I invite anyone who has experience with or knowledge about the CSP in general, or Gunderson specifically, to contact me if they would like to share what they know. My email address is william.reckmeyer@sjsu.edu.
In Memoriam

Joseph Boudreau
(History, ’03)
https://scholarworks.sjsu.edu/erfa_bios/365/

Bobbye Gorenberg
(Nursing, ’01)

Charles Keserich
(History, ’97)

Marvin Lee
(Economics, ’93)
https://scholarworks.sjsu.edu/erfa_bios/176/

Nancy Markham
(Humanities, ’01)

Tribute to Charles Keserich

By Jim Walsh

Charles Keserich (1931-2023), Emeritus Professor and former Chair of the Department of History, passed away in the presence of his niece on June 12. He had lived comfortably and well through his concluding retirement years at The Terraces, Los Altos. Though infrequently active among faculty organizations, Charles remained a regular at monthly lunches hosted by his multiple clusters of friends and his former colleagues.

Charles was the ideal colleague by temperament and by training: highly knowledgeable, but also infinitely patient, polite, and generous. His pre-SJSC experience in secondary teaching (European & US History, Latin, English Grammar, and Speech & Debate), plus his willingness, made Charles the prime sounding board for SJSU historians with publishing compulsions and the wisdom to seek help. Charles made your manuscript intelligible, and he did so with kindness.

During the precipitous enrollment shifts away from history, Department Chair Keserich opted (and encouraged other historians) to teach beyond the History Department. Otherwise, he could have leveraged his seniority against tenured (but junior) history colleagues, thus leaving them with nothing to teach. His understanding and his humanity allowed SJSU’s History Department not to be the CSU’s initiator of tenure reversal.

Charles was born of Croatian parents in Klein, Montana, which he once described as, “A mining camp, a village if you want to be generous.” Reliable employment and educational opportunities prompted the Keserich family to relocate to Seattle, WA, during his childhood. He earned a B.A. from the Univ. of Washington in 1952, an M.A. from the Univ. of California, Berkeley in 1961, and a Ph.D. from Washington State Univ. in 1966.

For those privileged to have been among Charles’ friends, our loss of his gracious and abiding charm will endure through the distant future. Charles was predeceased by his only sister.

Tribute to Bobbye Gorenberg

By Jayne Cohen

Dr. Bobbye Gorenberg served in the School of Nursing for many years as a Professor and School Director. She was an innovator throughout her career at SJSU. Dr. G was instrumental in enhancing Nursing at SJSU by initiating its transformation from a Department to a School, fostering a strong research agenda, encouraging federal grant writing, and developing new innovative programs. She provided opportunities for her faculty colleagues to grow and flourish by supporting their independent development needs, including exposure to international nursing. Her commitment to both the B.S. and M.S. students was strong and ongoing, promoting scholarship at all levels.

Bobbye started the Community-Based Nurse Managed Centers that provide clinical placements for nursing students taking clinical Community Health courses. These offer much needed out-of-hospital healthcare to underserved populations, especially the frail elderly. In 2009 she created the Dr. Bobbye Debenport Gorenberg Nurse Managed Centers Endowment with seed money and followed up with a bequest. This ongoing funding helps to support the continuing work of the Nursing Centers. Donations are welcome to assist in this endeavor.

In addition to all of her accomplishments in the School, Dr Gorenberg served in the Academic Senate and as Chair. She was active in ERFA, serving as its President in 1990-91. Beyond SJSU, Bobbye helped to establish The Terraces of Los Gatos, where she lived for twelve years.
By Jo Farb Hernández

It is often said that history is recounted by the winners: they have won the right to explain the past from their point of view. It is the same in the art world: those who have “won” in the mainstream market are the artists who appear in our textbooks and are featured in the splashy exhibitions in our large museums.

But there are other art expressions that are not linked to specialists who have formally studied in art or architecture schools. Among these are the creative manifestations of self-taught creator-builders who have monumentally changed the character of their personal living or working spaces. Motivated by an inner drive that results in work that is far from what the world tends to think of as “Art,” each is necessarily unique. Yet such spaces are not isolated phenomena; hundreds of what I call “art environments” have been documented around the world.

I have studied these environments for fifty years and have concentrated my research for the last 23+ in Spain. Through my most recent two books on this topic (2013 and 2023) I have catalogued and rigorously documented 144 sites that reveal an astonishing array of aesthetic manifestations. In so doing I have created Spain’s first true national inventory of this genre.

These environments include new constructions such as homes, grottoes, tombs, and chapels (even a cathedral!); densely decorated preexisting structures; massive groupings of sculptures or paintings or topiary; signs or inscriptions that proclaim the principles of the artist; assemblages of found objects; and much more. Generally, the artists construct these environments with locally available (and frequently recycled) materials; this means that the breadth of their work depends on the scarcity or abundance of materials, tempered by their own physical energy and tenacity. And because their work is so revelatory of their personal concerns and interests, these sites often come to serve, over time, as three-dimensional self-portraits of the artists’ lives.

While typically initiated as private projects, the appearance of these unusual spaces in the public sphere invites a broader response. As this reaction may be negative, the environments are also, for the most part, somewhat ephemeral, as, particularly after the artist’s death, they may be threatened by weather-related damage, vandalism, urban planners, or the desire
of heirs to utilize the space in another way. Consequently, documentation such as mine often becomes the only marker of their existence. And this is a loss, not only for the artist’s family, village, or country, but also for a global understanding of what human creativity is all about: what art is, who can make it, and where it can be seen. While art environments by self-taught makers are not generally the works we see in textbooks, these artists have much to teach us about perseverance and following their hearts, as they enable their creative forces to change not only their personal spaces but also their very lives.

*Singular Spaces II* was published in June 2023 by Five Continents Editions (Milano, Italy), with partial support from the CSU-ERFSA Charitable Foundation. It is comprised of two oversized volumes totaling 1,072 pages and including almost 1,100 photos, most of which I shot myself over the last ten years of research and documentation.

Art by Tarsici Baget Llobet; photo © Jo Farb Hernández, 2018

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**Academic Senate News**

**By Chris Jochim**

The September 11, 2023, Senate meeting was the first meeting of 2023-2024 and it was in person. In light of the date of the meeting (9/11), new Senate Chair Karthika Sasikumar led senators in a moment of silence. This was followed by the reports traditionally given by the University President, Provost, and, later in the meeting, other VPs and the Associated Students President. Most notable was a presentation on continuing efforts in the Academic Division to increase tenure density (in response to questions by faculty senators). The President asked Provost Del Casino to give an update. He reported that SJSU has been able only to maintain the status quo, despite efforts to hire more tenure-track faculty. With limited funds and SJSU’s location in a high-cost area, increased hiring is very difficult. SJSU remains at about 50% tenure density. Improvement during the current economic troubles for the California state government is unlikely.

There were only two legislative items up for debate and a vote: one Senate Management Resolution (AS 1857) from the Senate Executive Committee; and one policy amendment proposal from the Professional Standards Committee. Both were approved by Senators present.

The Senate Management Resolution established a Special Senate Committee on Representation, which is charged with considering several referrals to the Senate that request expansion of Senate membership, such as by adding additional staff members. The membership of the special committee was defined by the resolution, as was its purpose and the timeframe within which it would complete a report and present it to the Senate in Spring 2024.

The policy amendment from Professional Standards affected Policy S15-7 (Retention, Tenure and Promotion for Regular Faculty Employees: Procedures). It changed key language about the person who would issue the final decision letter to faculty seeking tenure and/or promotion. In line with practices established under the current President and Provost, the policy now states: “When delegated by the President, the Provost will make the final decision.” This was not the practice under the prior President. Senators welcomed the change by a unanimous vote.
Chat Room... Special News from and about our members.

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

Nancie Fimbel (Marketing and Decision Sciences, ’10) and her husband visited northern Manitoba in hopes of seeing the Northern Lights. They did! They also saw migrating caribou in the sub-Arctic tundra.

Joel Franks (Sociology, ’19) and his wife Cheryl moved to Washington, DC this summer. He is writing a book on the history of sport and recreation in California.

Marjorie Gifford (Math/Computer Science, ’92) has managed to keep traveling in spite of some surgeries. She and husband Gilbert Kahale visited friends in Oregon and Alaska in June and did a seven-day Pride of America tour around the Hawaiian Islands in August.

Sigurd Meldal (Computer Engineering, ’15) is settling into the leisurely life of a retiree: This fall he’ll be performing on-site accreditation reviews of universities in Lima (Peru), Cuenca (Ecuador) and the ever-exotic Upper Peninsula of Michigan. Next year he will serve as Vice Chair of Operations for the Engineering Accreditation Commission of ABET, (trying) to ensure that the review of some 700-800 engineering programs around the world unfolds smoothly.

Rob Moore (Kinesiology, ’83) recently celebrated his 100th birthday. Family and Willow Glen neighbors threw him a party, including a dog parade that garnered both local and national news coverage.

Bill Reckmeyer (Anthropology ’17) recently completed his 46th year as a SJSU faculty member and celebrated the graduation of his final SJSU student (Layla Forooghi – M.A. in Interdisciplinary Studies, Global Citizenship) at the Fall 2022 Commencement. In addition to publishing several articles during the last couple of years, he has also stayed busy fulfilling new responsibilities as a Professor of Cybernetics & Systems at the Australian National University (AUS) and as a Visiting Professor of Systems Studies at the University of Hull (UK).
Save the Date!
Holiday Celebration and Complimentary Lunch for ERFA Members and Guests
December 8, 11:30-1:30, at the SJSU MLK Library

And ... It's Not Too Late to Pay Your Dues
If you haven't yet sent in your 2023-24 ERFA dues, mail a check for $24 to Treasurer Bill Campsey at 308 Nino Way, Los Gatos, CA 95032-5519. Make the check payable to SJSU-ERFA.

Chat Room…  Special News from and about our members.
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Lonna Smith (Secondary Education/LLD, ’04) and her husband, Michael, recently took a short but wonderful vacation, starting in Denver, where they met up with two college classmates they hadn’t seen since graduation. They took a scenic train from Denver, through the Rockies, ending in Moab, Utah. There they visited Arches National Park and Canyonlands National Park.

Dennis L. Wilcox (Journalism & Mass Communications, ’05) and his wife, Marianne, recently enjoyed a three-week tour of Scotland with Overseas Adventure Travel (OAT), and also spent time in North Wales, Bath, and London. An outstanding memory was attending the annual Military Tattoo at Edinburgh castle where bands from 17 nations participated.

Diana Wu (Library, ’17) and her husband traveled to Kenya and Tanzania this summer. After their safari, they continued to Cologne and Amsterdam, an entirely different world!

ERFA ScholarWorks Project Hits 365 Biographies!

All ERFA members are invited to contribute autobiographical information to ScholarWorks, the archive that documents and showcases the achievements of SJSU faculty.

Our latest entries are from these colleagues:

- Joseph Boudreau [https://scholarworks.sjsu.edu/erfa_bios/365/]
- Christine Di Salvo [https://scholarworks.sjsu.edu/erfa_bios/364/]
- Kimb Massey [https://scholarworks.sjsu.edu/erfa_bios/363/]
- Sandra Olliges [https://scholarworks.sjsu.edu/erfa_bios/362/]
- Harry Mathias [https://scholarworks.sjsu.edu/erfa_bios/361/]
- Diane Guerrazzi [https://scholarworks.sjsu.edu/erfa_bios/360/]

ERFA members who are interested in participating in the ERFA Biographies project should contact Jo Bell Whitlatch via email at jobellw@gmail.com or by phone at 650-326-0505.
Did you know?

By Tim Hegstrom

1. Emeritus status can help you obtain many resources to help with your projects in retirement and to help you stay connected to the university. If you have retired from teaching at SJSU, you should apply for emeritus status. Retired Lecturers can apply and are usually eligible. If you are a recent retiree, you may know all about this. If you’ve been retired for a while, you can still apply. Emeritus status confers several privileges such as the use of university email and other digital resources, library privileges, parking, and more. (See https://www.sjsu.edu/emeritusfaculty/membership/member-benefits.php).

Before applying you might want to check the online campus directory (https://sjsuone.sjsu.edu/sjsuPhonebook) to see if you already have Emeritus status. If you are not in the on-line directory, you probably don’t have emeritus status and will likely want to apply for it.

A link to the Emeritus recommendation form can be found at the ERFA site above or on the Provost’s office site (https://www.sjsu.edu/provost/resources/forms.php).

2. You can have your SJSU email forwarded to your other email account, if you have one. Many retirees have an email account that they prefer to use on a regular basis. You can have the mail that goes to your sjsu.edu account forwarded to this other email account so that you can read all your mail in one place. The student employees at the IT “help desk” can help with this. They can also help if you have lost access to your SJSU email account. Email them at https://www.sjsu.edu/it/support/service-desk/index.php. Additionally, Jean Shiota in the Center for Faculty Development has been known to walk emeritus faculty through the steps to forward SJSU mail to other accounts when they needed help. You can schedule a Zoom session with her if that works for you. (jean.shiota@sjsu.edu).

If you have ideas for emeritus or senior opportunities that might be of interest, please contact Tim Hegstrom at tim.hegstrom@sjsu.edu