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Emeritus and Retired Faculty Association  
(ERFA) Newsletter

The SJSU Emeritus and Retired Faculty  
Association

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Winter 2023

## **SJSU ERFA News, Winter 2023**

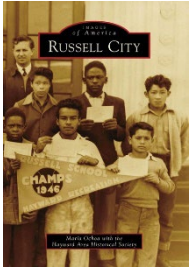
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In this issue: visit to Japantown; Academic Senate news; film group; Russell City memories; holiday party photos; free NY Times subscription ... and much more!

WINTER 2023 VOLUME 37 NUMBER 2



SJSU ERFA

# Newsletter

A Newsletter of the San José State University Emeritus and Retired Faculty Association

## **President's Message:** **Recapping the Fall**

**By Elaine Collins**

Greetings! I hope this message finds you well. As we conclude the fall season, I want to take a moment to recap the enriching activities and events organized by ERFA, some of which I hope you were able to attend.

Thanks to our program committee, consisting of Carmen Sigler, Chris Jochim, Mary Jo Gorney-Moreno, and Bill McGraw, for planning and organizing two wonderful events this semester. First, they arranged an excursion to the San José Buddhist Temple, combined with a visit to the San José Japanese American Historical Museum, on October 26. Although I was unable to attend, I heard from many people that the visits were both enjoyable and educational. Second, in November, the program committee hosted a webinar on Artificial Intelligence given by Dr. Fabio di Troia from the computer science department. His talk focused primarily on how AI is used, or can be used, in higher education. Afterwards, Tim Hegstrom moderated a very lively Q&A session with Lonna Smith assisting and Chris Jochim providing technical support for the webinar. For those of you that

missed it, the webinar recording is available [here](#).

Our Film Group has been meeting online each month with Karl Toepfer, chair of the film committee, to discuss movies. This fall we have watched and had very lively discussions on *Oppenheimer*, *The Meyerowitz Stories* and *The Father*. Please consider attending the next film discussion, which will be held on January 16, 2024, film

TBD. Email Karl at [Karl.Toepfer@sjsu.edu](mailto:Karl.Toepfer@sjsu.edu) to become a member.

Our activities committee of Lonna Smith, Lucy McProud, and Elba Maldonado-Colon organized a wonderful holiday luncheon on December 8. I was so happy to see so many of you there!!! The food was amazing, and you obviously had a wonderful time reconnecting with each other. Pictures capturing joyous moments are below.



*Mary-Jo Gorney-Moreno, Elaine Collins and Tim Hegstrom at the holiday party; photo by Tom Layton*

Our chair of the ERFA research and awards committee, Lucy McProud, sent the ERFA RSCA award application digitally to all faculty in early December. Awardees will be announced at our May business meeting and luncheon.

Thanks to everyone who made each event so special! Wishing you all very happy holidays and a joyous and healthy New Year!

## ERFA Visits Japantown

By Carmen Sigler

On October 26, a group of ERFA members and their guests got together to explore San José's Japantown, one of the last three remaining historical Japantowns in the United States. Our visit started with a docent-led tour of the Japanese American History Museum which chronicles the arrival of early Japanese settlers in Santa Clara County, their contributions to agriculture in the region, and their experience during World War II. After



*ERFA Visits Japanese American Museum of San José;  
photo by Bauchin Jochim*

being warmly received by the museum representatives (some of whom mentioned their connections to San José State), we were assigned to small groups and guided through the facility by a team of volunteers that included the museum's board chair.

After that, we headed to the beautiful Betsuin Buddhist Church. Our host, the Reverend Sakamoto, provided us with information about the history of Buddhism and its introduction to Japan as well as the history of San José's temple. Having just visited the historical museum, ERFA members asked about the situation of the church before and after WWI. Rev. Sakamoto informed us that, while the organization dates back to 1902, the current building was completed in 1937 and survived the war years with the aid of a local attorney. After the war, its resources were important to the many Japanese Americans returning from internment camps to restart their lives. For a time, the temple was home to many who had no homes to which to return.

At the conclusion of the visit, many of us explored the area on our own and enjoyed lunch at one of the many local restaurants.

## 2023-24 SJSU ERFA Executive Board

**President** — Elaine Collins

**Vice Pres.** — Winifred Schultz-Krohn

**Secretary** — Celia Bakke

**Treasurer** — Bill Campsey

**Members at Large** — Elba Maldonado-Colon,  
Carmen Sigler, Beth Von Till

**Academic Senator** — Chris Jochim

**Past President** — Mary Jo Gorney-Moreno

### Ex Officio Members

**Archivist** — Celia Bakke

**Consulations** — Elba Maldonado-Colon

**CSU-ERFA Reps** — Nancie Fimbel, Chris Jochim,  
Joan Merdinger

**Liaison to the Tower Foundation** — Jackie Snell

**Website Administrator** — Bethany Shifflett

**Activities Com.** — Lonna Smith, Elba Maldonado-Colon, Lucy McProud

**Biographies Com.** — Joan Merdinger, Carol Christensen, Celia Bakke, Ji-Mei Chang, Jo-Bell Whitlatch

**Faculty Research and Creative Activity Com.** —  
Lucy McProud

**Film Com.** — Karl Toepfer

**Membership Com.** — Joan Merdinger, Beth Von Till, Susan McClory

**Newsletter Com.** — Nancie Fimbel, David Mesher

**Privileges & Advocacy Com.** — Tim Hegstrom, Nancie Fimbel, Bethany Shifflett

**Program Com.** — Carmen Sigler, Chris Jochim, Mary Jo Gorney-Moreno, Bill McCraw

**SJSU ERFA Office: MacQuarrie Hall 438D**

**Email:** [celia.bakke@sjsu.edu](mailto:celia.bakke@sjsu.edu)

**Visit the SJSU ERFA Website at**  
[www.sjsu.edu/emeritusfaculty](http://www.sjsu.edu/emeritusfaculty)

**Views and opinions expressed in this SJSU ERFA Newsletter are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the position of the editors or of San José State University.**

# CSU-ERFSA Executive Committee Meeting

## Zoom: October, 24, 2023

The three SJSU delegates to CSU ERFSA, Joan Merdinger, Chris Joachim, and Nancie Fimbel, attended the fall Zoom meeting. Also in attendance from SJSU was Bethany Shifflett, the secretary and archivist of the organization.

**Headliners:** The CFA has authorized a faculty strike. The CalPERS Long-Term Care Program suit has been settled and members involved can expect checks in January 2024.

ERFSA President Barry Pasternack has contacted AMBIA (Association for Member Benefits and Insurance Agency) to discontinue our affiliation; they had promised increased membership, but the increase has probably occurred because of pricing changes, not this affiliation. ERFSA is seeking other partnerships. In the meantime, the membership committee is considering whether to invite those nearing retirement and/or spouses of retirees to become associate members. The half-price discount for dues during the first year of membership will be discontinued as of July 1, 2024, to see if indeed it made the difference in attracting new members. The membership committee hopes the new chancellor will be cooperative in providing ERFSA with the names and contact information of new staff retirees.

One committee of ERFSA handles Pre- and Post-Retirement Concerns. This group has been and will remain focused on securing COVID-related compensation for FERP faculty during the 2020/21 academic year. In addition, SJSU emeritus faculty member Jonathan Karpf will take the lead in a revision of the *ERFSA Survivor's Guide*. The guide will add technical/digital information.

Two guests attended the meeting. Darlene Yee-Melichar, the new faculty trustee (from San Francisco State), introduced herself by providing updates on the approved five-year increase in student tuition and the upcoming re-allocation of funds to campuses based on their enrollments. Meeting the targets the campuses promised the state in a budget compact is crucial to maintaining state funding to the campuses. Dr. Yee-Melichar also expressed confidence in the new chancellor, Mildred Garcia, whose term began this fall.

Beth Steffel, the chair of the state-wide Academic Senate (ASCSU), provided a report on the issues of that organization. In short, the Senate wants the chancellor's office to consult during the academic year on issues such as the General Education Transfer Curriculum and student tuition increases. The Senate is also concerned about faculty salaries and bachelor degree duplication with community colleges.

### Items of Interest:

- By 2029, tuition in the CSU will be over \$7000/year. The percent of students receiving financial aid is 80%; 60% do not pay any tuition.
- AB 656 expanded CSU doctoral opportunities.
- A proposal to prohibit campuses from withholding degrees/certificates based on debt owed is under consideration by the state.
- The CSU is considering offering associate degrees.
- SB 252 regarding fossil fuel holdings was pulled for this year.
- CSU practices will be changed in response to the state auditor's report finding many problems with our compliance with the federal and state Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Acts.
- The Chancellor's Office is taking a more active role in program review, especially concerning suspension and discontinuation of programs.
- Based on the Cozen Title IX report, the CSU still needs to build clearer processes and structures, as well as hire more people, to prevent and address cases of harassment.
- CSU-ERFSA will encourage the CSU to update dental benefits.

Merry Pawlowski, executive director, requested news from the campuses for *The Reporter*, the ERFSA newsletter. Information should be emailed to [mpawloski@scub.edu](mailto:mpawloski@scub.edu). Our SJSU colleague Stephanie Coopman will become the web administrator beginning in January 2024.

The next meeting of ERFSA will be in April 2024; it will be a hybrid meeting.

(Submitted by Nancie Fimbel, using the notes of Bethany Shifflett.)



## *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](mailto:fimbeln@gmail.com) or by snail mail at 239 Cypress Point Drive, Mountain View, CA 94043.

**Jill Cody** (Recreation & Tourism, '06), producer and host of the radio show "Be Bold America!" on KSQD, was profiled in the November *Carmel Living Magazine* in an article celebrating the expansion of the community non-profit station throughout Monterey County, tripling its coverage area, by raising over \$400,000! Jill's catalog of amazing interviews, with people such as Dr. Bandy X. Lee and Dr. Ruth Ben-Ghiat, can be found at [jillcodyauthor.com](http://jillcodyauthor.com).

**Howard Combs** (Marketing & Decision Sciences, '16) continues to enjoy teaching and conducting research in Thailand. This spring he is teaching Global Brand Marketing at the graduate level, and a course in the International BBA Program at Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok.

**Phyllis Connolly** (Nursing, '11) continues to volunteer at the Monarch Dunes Butterfly Habitat near San Luis Obispo. She collects weekly data on the wind—its direction, speed, and temperature—as well as the light. With a Thanksgiving count of over 2,000, the butterflies are back! Because the numbers have been minimal for the last two years, this is very good news. The retired nurses meet on Zoom every few months; they are celebrating the recent appointment of Lisa Rauch as Director of Nursing.



*Monarch butterflies; photo by Phyllis Connolly*

**Frannie Edwards** (Political Science, '22) and **Dan Goodrich**, Senior Transportation Security Scientist, Mineta Transportation Institute, completed a funded research project on the "Incident Command System for Transportation Staff" for the Transportation Research Board's National Cooperative Highway Research Program. Frannie's poster session at the November national meeting of the International Association of Emergency Managers in Long Beach received the Silver Award. She also received her 5th recertification as a Certified Emergency Manager, marking 25 years of professional recognition. There are fewer than 2,000 CEMs in the United States.

**Anne Fountain** (World Languages & Literature, '12) attended a meeting of the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese in Spain and participated in the induction of Argentine novelist Ana Maria Shua as honorary member. Husband **Mike Conniff** continues to lecture on cruise ships in the Americas, focusing on exotic destinations and history. He also contributed to the podcast Real Dictators, about Panama's strongman Manuel Noriega.

**Jo Farb Hernandez** (Art & Art History, '19) has been busy giving interviews about her Spanish art book featured in the last issue of the *Newsletter*. Radio Sant Boi, Radio Elche and Radio Television Canarias are distracting our colleague from the article writing she's doing on the topic of self-taught constructors of art environments. Five articles are under her belt since summer—maybe three more by the time you read this!

**Michael Kimbarow** (Communication Disorders & Sciences, '19) published the fourth edition of his textbook *Cognitive Communication Disorders* in October. The project was partially supported with funds from the CSU-ERFSA Grant Award program.

**Jill Steinberg** (Undergraduate Studies, Psychology, '07) published a chapter on successful retirement in *The Aging Consumer: Perspectives from Psychology and Marketing*, edited by Aimee Drolet and Carolyn Yoon. For Boston University's Alumni Association, she is currently developing a mentorship program to engage people who are in our age group and stage of life. Her webinar, "Finding Purpose in Retirement: From Retiring to Rewiring," attracted over 890 people, a record! In addition, Jill and her dog Tuggy go to institutions where people need some doggie love, including such places as camps for children with cancer, UCSC during finals, and libraries where children read to Tuggy, a trained therapy animal.

... continued on page 5

## Chat Room...

... continued from page 4

**Kim S. Uhlik** (Recreation and Leisure, '11) had his large-format acrylic painting juried into the Nov/Dec "Home Sweet Home" exhibit presented in the Clark County (Nevada) Administration Building gallery. His other works, and those of his wife Johanna, are on their web site [everyinchart.com](http://everyinchart.com)

**Dennis L. Wilcox** (Journalism & Mass Communications, '05) was a keynote speaker in October at the 38<sup>th</sup> annual conference of the Inter-American Conference of Public Relations in Tegucigalpa, Honduras. "It was really great to meet so many academics and communications professionals who used my textbook (Spanish edition) in their undergraduate and graduate studies," says Dennis.

## ERFA Holiday Party

### By Lonna Smith

On Friday, December 8, sixty ERFA members and guests gathered in the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library for an afternoon of renewing friendships and feasting on delicious Italian food at the annual Holiday Celebration. If the sounds of animated chatter and laughter were any indication, the afternoon was a great success.

Spartan Eats Catering, SJSU's in-house catering service, served up a generous array of Italian dishes ranging from chicken marsala and eggplant parmesan to a huge antipasto display. Wine and sparkling cider were also served.

The celebratory crowd paused for a few minutes to hear a warm welcome from ERFA President Elaine Collins, before resuming the festivities.\* The overwhelming consensus was that

"it was wonderful to see you!"

\*Editor's note: Elaine also thanked those responsible for the planning of the party, including especially Lonna, who chairs the activities committee. Here's Carmen Sigler's comment: "Lonna has devoted countless hours to plan this event, and she deserves our gratitude and congratulations."



*Clockwise from left: Lela Noble, Tom Layton and Mabel Miyasaki, photo by Mary-Jo Gorney-Moreno; Bill McGraw and Carole Carter; Thalia Anagnos and Gail Evans; Bethany Shifflett and Joanne Rife; Jack Kurzweil and Gene Bernardini, photos by Elaine Collins.*



## The ERFA Film Group!

**By Karl Toepfer**

The ERFA Film Group convenes once each month to discuss a movie all members have been invited to see. The club convenes on Zoom. The club currently uses Amazon Streaming and Netflix as the platforms for viewing the selected films, because those platforms are widely accessible to club members. Viewers are encouraged to suggest films for club viewing. Discussions of films are always very exciting, because of the diversity, complexity, seriousness, and often insightful humor in the sharing of responses to the films and to peculiar events and experiences related to the films. It is a delightful social and intellectual occasion. Join us! If you would like to be added to the membership list, please send an email and questions to Karl Toepfer: [karl.toepfer@sjsu.edu](mailto:karl.toepfer@sjsu.edu). We welcome you to the ERFA Film Group!

## Call for Nominations to the ERFA Executive Board

**By Winifred Schultz-Krohn**

At the next SJSU ERFA annual business meeting, to be held in conjunction with our spring 2024 luncheon, the nominating committee will recommend a slate of candidates to serve on the executive board, and members in attendance will cast their votes. The elective positions to be filled this year are vice president (to serve as president in AY 2025/26), treasurer (2-year term), Academic Senate representative (1-year term), and two member-at-large positions (2-year terms). If you are interested in being a candidate for any of these positions or would like to submit a nomination, please email Winifred Schultz-Krohn at [Winifred.schultz-krohn@sjsu.edu](mailto:Winifred.schultz-krohn@sjsu.edu) for details. Nominations close on February 1, 2024. The president has the authority to appoint members to certain positions. If you are interested in joining a committee, please email Winifred Schultz-Krohn at [Winifred.schultz-krohn@sjsu.edu](mailto:Winifred.schultz-krohn@sjsu.edu).

## Emeritus, Retired Faculty Awards: A Tax Deductible Donation

**By Jackie Snell**

Please consider a donation to the ERFA Faculty Research and Creative Activity Award fund. This fund, created by the ERFA board in 2014, is deposited in and administered by the SJSU Tower Foundation, a 501(c)(3) organization. As a result, all donations to the fund are tax deductible.

On behalf of the membership of ERFA, the board has now provided awards of \$2500 each for 20 faculty members—tenured, tenure-track and long-term lecturers—from AY 2014/15 to the present. Click [here](#) for descriptions of the projects of previous winners.

The Board will soon be reviewing applications for the AY 2023/24 awards. You will meet the 2024 awardees at our spring business luncheon. Since 2015, the ERFA Board has invited each year's awardees to make short presentations about their work. It has been heartwarming to hear the gratitude of our younger colleagues for this important and most welcome opportunity to further their research and creative work.

**These grants are not supported through our modest dues.** There are two ways to donate:

- Use this [direct link](#) to complete your donation online, or
- Donate by check. Please fill out the attached [donation form \[docx\]](#) and mail your check, with the form, to our ERFA Tower account liaison (details with the donation form).

**Note: There is a way to minimize income taxes and still meet your Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) from your IRA. In lieu of a cash payment, make a donation directly from your IRA account by check or wire. Ask your bank for checks from your IRA account. Then use the attached donation form.**

Thank you for your consideration of this request!



## The Master of Layout Retires

Hearty thanks to Clyde Lawrence (Journalism & Mass Communications, '03) for being a key partner in the production of dozens and dozens of issues of the *ERFA Newsletter* over the last 20 years. The job has changed substantially, moving from fitting our updates into exactly eight pages—with room left for a mailing label and stamp—to formatting an attractive online publication. Clyde has learned new skills without complaint and with obviously appealing results. Gene Bernardini, former long-time editor of the *Newsletter*, has this to say:

Clyde began working on the *ERFA Newsletter* in 2005, shortly after retiring from the journalism department. In the two decades since, I can't recall Clyde ever missing an issue, or a deadline. His job as the *Newsletter's* graphics and layout designer was a complicated one that required spatial, artistic and technical talents to enhance the content of the stories. Clyde used his skills to create clever headlines, to find relevant photos that illustrated articles, and to provide small visual insertions that relieve a page of densely packed prose. He did all this with apparent ease, even pleasure, year after year.

But Clyde's greatest attribute is his personality, which makes him the best of associates or workmates. He has a gentle, thoughtful disposition, a soft voice, an easy smile and an always-ready laugh. He is sensitive to others, makes suggestions only when asked, or when the need is obvious—and even then, offers them with humility.

Echoing Gene, I say Clyde's the greatest! He's not just our colleague but our friend.

## CalPERS Information – Reimbursement for IRMAA Premium

### By Joan Merdinger

In late November of each year, as a Medicare recipient, you receive a letter from Social Security titled "Social Security Administration Important Information." This letter is sent to inform you of the rate for the Medicare deduction from your Social Security monthly check to pay for Medicare Part B and Medicare Part D benefits for the upcoming year. As a retiree in CalPERS, you are reimbursed each month – in your retirement CalPERS check – for the basic Social Security Medicare Part B premium. For 2024, the standard Medicare Part B premium reimbursement will be \$174.70 per person. This is an increase of \$9.80 from the 2023 rate of \$164.90.

If you think you may be eligible for additional reimbursement because you have an IRMAA (income-related monthly adjustment amount) which increases your premiums due to a higher income, you must apply to CalPERS in writing, and this must be done each year. You are also able to apply for IRMAA reimbursement for prior years.

For each method of application, you need to include a copy of your November 2023 letter from the Social Security Administration, which describes your Medicare premiums for the upcoming year. Make a copy of each and every page. If you file your tax return jointly, include a copy of the complete letter to your spouse or partner, if that individual is included in your CalPERS benefits.

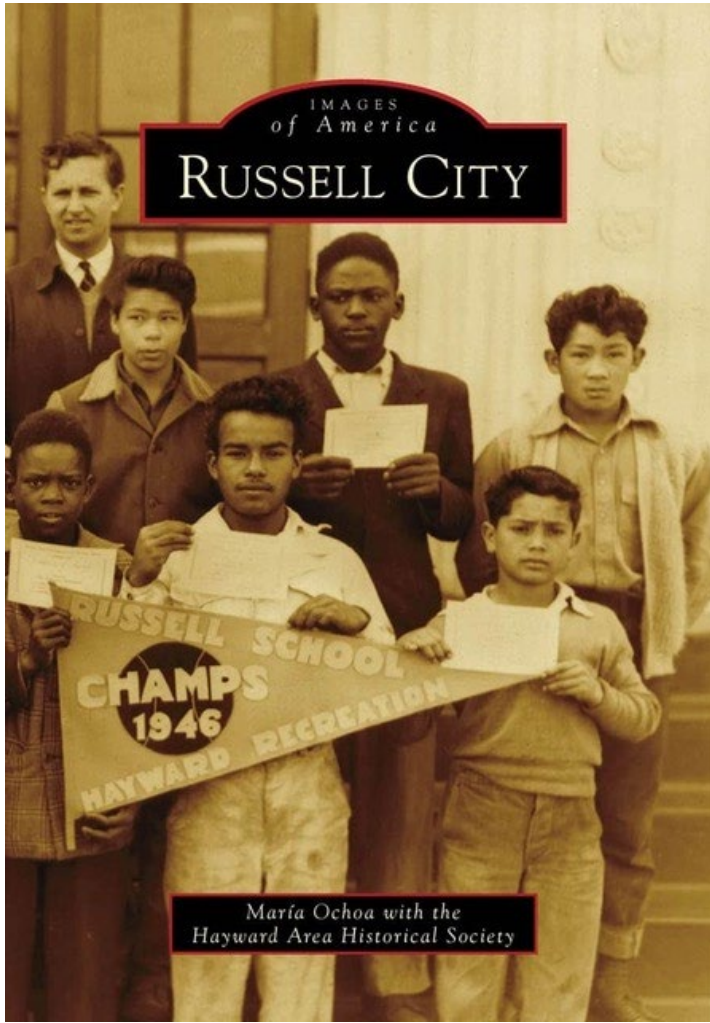
You can apply for your IRMAA reimbursement in one of the following three ways:

- Mail your written request along with the required materials to: CalPERS Member Account Management Division, Attention: Medicare Administration, P.O. Box 942715, Sacramento, CA 94229-2715;
- Fax your written request and all the required documents to (800) 959-6545; or
- Go to your individual CalPERS account and upload your required documents directly to CalPERS.

Expect a response from CalPERS within a few weeks. It will then take from 30-90 days for the additional reimbursement to be reflected in your CalPERS retirement check. See [Medicare Enrollment Guide](#), August 2023.8.1, pp. 16-17 (CalPERS Health Benefits Program, Publication HBD-65).



## Voices of Russell City: The city may be gone, but the memories live on



### By María Ochoa, Professor Emerita SISS

Russell City was not a metropolis, as its name suggests. But it was a community whose mostly Mexican and Black residents were bonded by their outlier social status. The people who once resided in this bayside community, now part of the City of Hayward, are gone. In 1964, the town was razed, and the families who lived there were removed from their homes, churches, and businesses via redevelopment findings that declared the community blighted.

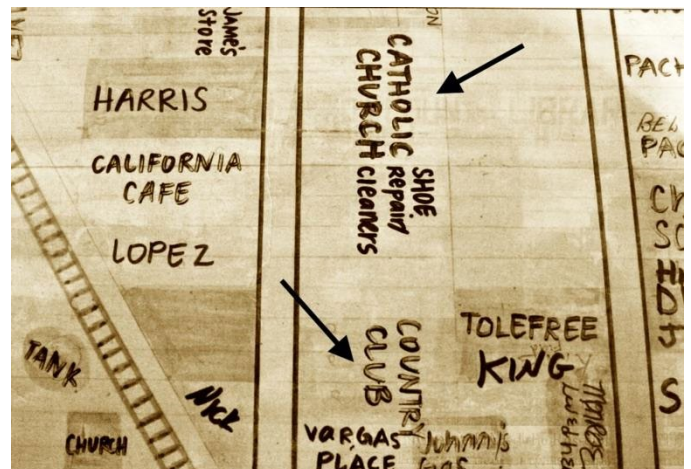
Descendants of the Russell City families and those few living former residents are now seeking reparations from the City of Hayward and the County of Alameda for the loss of their properties and livelihoods. As of this writing, they have received formal apologies from both agencies but nothing more.

An exhibition about Russell City sponsored by the [Hayward Area Historical Society](#) (HAHS) in the year 2000 was the inspiration for a series of public history projects I created. I wanted to apply my skills as a historian in order to keep alive the residents' stories, as well as the social circumstances of their lives and, ultimately, of their displacement.

I have interviewed more than forty former residents and business owners from the town. Our discussions covered wide-ranging topics—immigration and migration, racial inequality, social and cultural bonding, farming, religious services, schooling, and the inequities of land use decision-making, especially the ill effects of redevelopment policies on people of color.

These interviews resulted in a photo history book, [Images of America: Russell City](#), developed in cooperation with HAHS. I was able to create the video, [Voices of Russell City: The Reunion Picnic](#), which presents personal accounts from people who attended an annual gathering of former residents.

My research interest is fueled by my childhood experiences with the community. Every Sunday in the late 1950s and early 1960s, my parents escorted the family to a Spanish-language Mass held in a storefront church located two doors down from the Russell City Country Club. We smiled as we passed the nightclub, commenting on the discrepancy between the building's weary condition and the glamour that its name evoked.



Map indicating Catholic church and Country Club  
(Photo courtesy of Sam and Juanita Nava)

To say that the houses of Russell City residents were “modest” is something of an exaggeration. Homes lacked indoor plumbing and utilities, households relied on well water of dubious cleanliness, and the absence of paved streets and pedestrian sidewalks underscored the difficult circumstances that people endured in their daily lives. Many of the homes were remnants from the previous century.

Racial covenants that prohibited the sale of real property to

Mexicans, Blacks, and Asians were commonplace and upheld by realtors and homeowners in the surrounding communities, including Hayward, San Lorenzo, and San Leandro. As a result, areas such as Russell City were purposefully designated for sale to people of color, to prevent them from owning homes and businesses in white-dominant neighborhoods.

The County of Alameda was the governing body for the area in which Russell City was located. There was no attempt by the county to assist the residents with their needs. Residents and business owners had hoped for self-governance in order to address infrastructure issues, as well as to establish common, foundational services such as fire and police. During the 1950s and 1960s, they repeatedly petitioned to incorporate as a city and, each time, their application was rejected.

Instead, the people of Russell City were displaced, and their community was destroyed through eminent domain proceedings. The area was annexed by the City of Hayward, and an industrial park was built. As if to underscore the demise of the community, the name of the main street leading into the town, Russell Road, was changed to West Winton Avenue.

The displacement of Russell City townspeople parallels that of other rural California communities, where residents and businesses were removed to make way for urban expansion through redevelopment programs. The decimation of the Filmore District in San Francisco, East

Palo Alto, and West Oakland, as well as Chávez Ravine in Los Angeles, demonstrate how established rural communities of color were denied opportunities to develop thriving, self-governed municipalities.

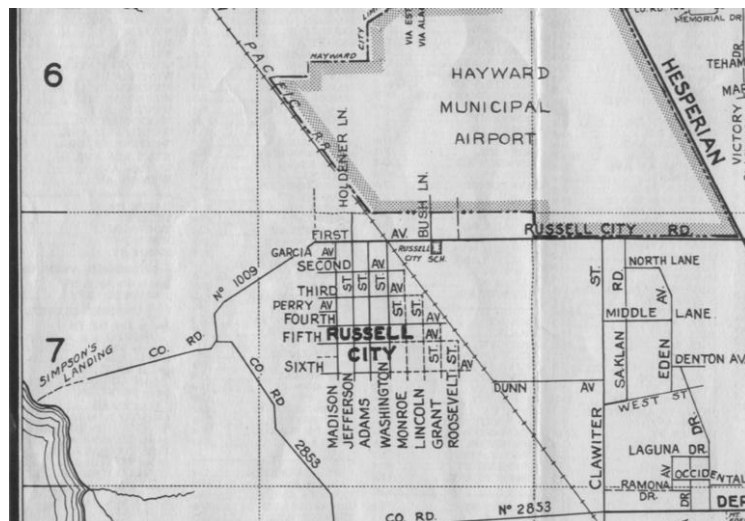


*A Russell City street after the rains (photo courtesy of the Hayward Historical Society)*

Russell City was a place where folded money was hard to come by. However, the collective agency of Russell City residents was a force greater than the constraints of being marginalized. Out of a commitment to their respective families and to each other, they were committed to awaken every morning and go forth into the world.

While their stories are illuminating in their capacity to show the resilience of a community, it would be a mistake to read the accounts as examples of

bootstrapping tropes so common in the telling of the American Dream myths. These histories are intended to serve, in part, as documentation of the ways in which the role of social capital and access to it, or lack thereof, adversely affected



*Russell City map c.1950s (photo courtesy of the Hayward Area Historical Society)*

Mexican and Black lives in one town in the mid-twentieth century.



## The Real Thing

**By Nils Peterson**

December – the remains of the summer garden,  
stalks of sea-lavender lined with tiny blossoms,  
half fresh, half wasted – among them a hummingbird  
in a glistening green vest. Such hard work  
this late harvesting, this hanging between fierce  
wingbeats before each tiny blue bowl, long tongue  
scraping out the last drops of the old year.

Twenty feet away is the feeder I fill faithfully  
every few days – one part sugar to four parts water.  
I know he knows it's there. I've seen him grip the red  
plastic rail and dip his beak again, again, watched  
the surface of my offering ripple with his sipping.

Today he rejects my sugar water for flowers almost straw.  
Some mornings one just wants the real thing.

## ERFA Project Hits 368 Biographies

Three more entries have been added to the ERFA  
Biographies project.

Michael S. Katz

[https://scholarworks.sjsu.edu/erfa\\_bios/369/](https://scholarworks.sjsu.edu/erfa_bios/369/)

Jean Marie Novak

[https://scholarworks.sjsu.edu/erfa\\_bios/367/](https://scholarworks.sjsu.edu/erfa_bios/367/)

Winifred Schultz-Krohn

[https://scholarworks.sjsu.edu/erfa\\_bios/366/](https://scholarworks.sjsu.edu/erfa_bios/366/)

ERFA members who are interested in  
participating in the ERFA Biographies project  
should contact Jo Bell Whitlatch via email  
at [jobellw@gmail.com](mailto:jobellw@gmail.com) or phone at 650-326-0505.

## Did you know?

**By Tim Hegstrom**

1. An on-line subscription to the *New York Times* is available for free to SJSU Emeritus Faculty who have maintained their campus email address?

Several months ago I wrote about how your .edu email address can get you access to the *New York Times* at the student and faculty rate. As it turns out, you can do better than that. Digital access to the *New York Times* is available for FREE through the library subscription. This subscription will not allow you access to the famous NYT Cooking or Crosswords sections of the paper, but the description of Adolph Ochs in 1857 still applies. "All The News That's Fit to Print" will soon be available just a few clicks away. If you have a current *New York Times* account addressed to your SJSU email, you will have to unsubscribe to that first. All is explained at this [library webpage](#). Many thanks to David Mesher for this NYT tip. As he explains, "You download an app on your mobile phone, and you only have to renew it every four years."

2. With your SJSU ID number you can get discounts at local attractions?

This may be just what you need if you have holiday visitors. Check [here](#) for details.

We are on the lookout for other opportunities. If you have tips about discounts or access privileges available to seniors or emeritus faculty, please let us know at [tim.hegstrom@sjsu.edu](mailto:tim.hegstrom@sjsu.edu). We have explained how to apply for emeritus status and how to obtain an updated Tower Card in previous issues of ERFA News.



## Campus Academic Senate News

### By Chris Jochim

There were two meetings in October. At the first, President Teniente-Matson's update on Title IX matters was presented by her assistant, Lisa Millora, who explained that the Department of Justice (DOJ) would be working with the campus for another three years. (The DOJ resolution agreement, completed last year, includes a four-year plan.) In October representatives of the DOJ met with faculty, staff, and students to understand how we are meeting the resolution agreement. Lisa also provided an update on the search for a permanent Title IX coordinator, which is now a search for an Associate Vice President for Title IX and Equal Opportunity. Legislative action at the meeting was limited to approving minor changes to two policies that were recommended by the Professional Standards committee. Policy S13-6 (Campus Faculty Awards and Nominations for System Faculty Awards) was amended to bring the process and forms used for nominations into line with recent practice. Policy F08-4 (Sabbatical Leaves) was amended to clarify eligibility for leaves.

At the second October meeting, Charles Faas, VP/CFO, and Vincent Del Casino, VP/Provost, addressed the SJSU budget shortfall. It was caused by rising costs, reduced enrollments, spending for the development and implementation of SJSU Transformation 2030, and no fee increases for a decade. Possible solutions to the problem include \$20 million in base reductions from the state for 2023-24 and restoration of enrollments to target levels, including by the expansion of SJSU Online. To address its share of the shortfall, Academic Affairs would, among other actions, restore faculty-student ratios to pre-pandemic levels, initiate tighter guidelines on offering low-enrolled classes, and scrutinize the use of assigned time.

At the November Senate meeting, Interim Chief Diversity Officer (CDO) Dawn Lee reported on the Black Student Success Report as well as on the search for a permanent CDO. The provost answered questions on plans for reducing class sections across campus in Spring 2024. The questions indicated concern and suspicion about planning to cut sections well ahead of the start of classes at a time when (1) faculty are concerned about a labor contract and have voted to approve a strike, if needed, and also (2) departments do not yet know which sections will fill or not. There

were first readings of two key legislative items, which were voted on during the December meeting as described in the next paragraph.

On December 4, President Teniente-Matson reported that the VP of Student Affairs, Patrick Day, is leaving the University. She also announced that a new Chief Diversity Officer (CDO) would soon be named, and, in fact, announced the following day that Kristin Dukes, Ph.D., has been selected. Dr. Dukes has served in this same role at Chatham University in Pennsylvania. As for important legislation, a Policy Recommendation (AS 1860) from the Organization and Government committee recommended a change to the Senate constitution that would add the VP for Research and Innovation as a new senator, while reducing by one the number of senators representing the Academic Division. Second, the Professional Standards committee recommended an amendment to Policy S99-8 (Professional Responsibility) that would add a section about the nature and consequences of behavior deemed to constitute "bullying." I include here the relevant definitional text:

Examples of bullying could include, but are not limited to:

1. Abusive expression directed at another person in the workplace, such as derogatory remarks that are outside the range of reasonably accepted expressions of disagreement, disapproval, or critique in an academic or professional setting;
2. Unwanted physical contact and/or aggressive, derogatory, hateful, or otherwise unprofessional nonverbal and/or nonvocal expressions;
3. Exclusion and/or isolation leading to harm to another person's reputation or hindering of another person's work.

Both policy recommendations were approved by senators present.

### In Memoriam

**Rosemary Messick**  
(College of Education)



## ERFA Webinar on Artificial Intelligence

### By Tim Hegstrom

On November 8, ERFA hosted a Zoom webinar about Artificial Intelligence (AI) with Fabio di Troia, an assistant professor in the SJSU computer science department. Because AI is already embedded in our daily experiences, and because it looms large in our hopes and fears for the future, this instruction proved both useful and timely.

Dr. di Troia divided his presentation into four parts: Basic Concepts of AI, AI in Academia, Challenges and

Concerns, and Academic Dishonesty. Let me focus particularly on what he said about AI as used in the university setting. First, AI can already automate routine administrative functions such as writing responses to educational program applicants. It can also help generate coursework and learning activities for students. For example, AI models can be prompted to “design a math lesson plan for undergraduate students focusing on basic calculus,” “create a worksheet to teach Italian verb conjugation,” or “generate five essay prompts focusing on the impacts of climate change in California.” In the future AI seems likely to be able to simulate student reactions and understanding of a professor’s lectures while giving simultaneous suggestions to the professor for improvement.

The concerns about AI in academia are numerous. The current models lack a solid pedagogical approach, which means the learning needs of individual students can be missed entirely. There is also the potential for selection bias in such areas as admissions and grading. Several questions focused on bias. Dr. di Troia affirmed that the data available for use by the AI model can lead to biases against minority groups. However, when Pam Stacks asked whether AI can reveal bias and thus become a tool to reduce an endemic problem, Dr. di Troia said he thought it could.

A third area of concern focuses on various legal and moral issues. Among the challenges of detecting academic dishonesty is that it is difficult to be completely certain that the student suspected of cheating is using AI, particularly if the student is clever about the instructions given to the AI model. For example, ChatGPT (a familiar AI program) can be told to write an essay in a particular linguistic style. Thus, the teacher’s intuition that “THIS student did not write this essay,” will be undermined if the model has been

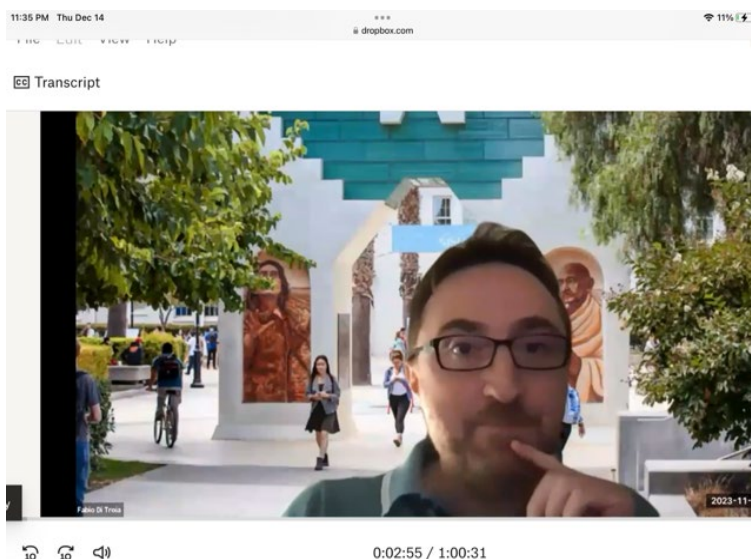
instructed to write in, say, “the style of the average undergraduate.” And it is not always easy to know if a student is using a smart phone to find answers during a test even if the computer’s browser is on lock-down mode. Dr. di Troia said the university doesn’t have complete solutions to all the issues surrounding cheating.

AI’s uses and abuses in the classroom were strong concerns of the

participants. We wanted to know about assistance in grading: can AI give partial credit in marking a math exam? Yes, it can project the steps necessary to solve the problem and detect these. Can it give feedback on an essay? Yes, if the professor supplies a grading rubric.

Dr. di Troia’s presentation was recorded, and I urge you to watch the video, available [here](#). Dr. di Troia talked about his work with students to attack malware, his work to recruit women and minority students into the AI industry, and the process required to conduct AI modeling. His argument that AI models are not, in fact, intelligent is also worth hearing (and believing). Dr. di Troia led an excellent webinar.

The ERFA Programs Committee will continue to bring occasional webinars, like this one, to the membership. They provide our remote emeritus faculty with a way to stay connected with their colleagues and the university, and they show off the quality of SJSU’s young faculty.



*Professor Fabio di Troia, Computer Science Department*