PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE
Dean Popp, Economics

Well, it is that time of the year again when I sit down to write a President’s Message. Sometimes I struggle a bit with finding a topic but this time it came rather easily. Our organization is comprised of retired faculty and retired staff but in many ways faculty often get more recognition and notice. The purpose of this message is to attempt to remedy some of this lack of recognition for staff; after all, April 26 is Administrative Professionals Day. I remember when I became the Department Chair for the Economics Department and I was a relatively young and inexperienced faculty member. The Administrative Professional (then known as the Department Secretary) was Betty Wolkonisky who was not at all shy in suggesting to me what I should do. (By the way, Betty was a founding member of SDSURA and is still alive and kicking at age 95.) At the time, I was delighted to have someone point me in the right direction and give me an unceremonious push and Betty was quite accomplished in satisfying my need. As the demands of administering a department were provided to me I came to appreciate the sage advice of several other staff members around the university, not the least of whom was Norma Summersgill in Human Resources (then known as The Personnel Office). Sharon McMahon and Helen Savage, in the College of Arts and Letters, were always there with a word of advice often provided with a hint of sarcasm to the neophyte who was asking. Then Jill Tavolazzi took me under her wing in Faculty Affairs and taught me the ropes. Again, there was little diplomacy and much needed direction administered by Jill. Later in my time on campus, I was able to find a receptive and understanding ear in the Vice-President’s Office from Maureen Conn and wise counsel from Marcia Crandall in the President’s Office. Each of these persons had no idea how comforting it was to see a smiling face and reserved and measured suggestions in what was otherwise an intimidating environment and they all knew how to make it happen, how to get it done! I am sure that each of you has staff members who have assisted you in finding your way through the maze of administrative SDSU. I have only mentioned a few who were particularly helpful to me but there are many more too numerous to mention who provided a kind word or thoughtful suggestion at just the right moment. Even more important are those staff who labor behind the scenes and provide us benefits that we are not even aware of. A hearty thank you to all of the staff, especially those in the SDSURA.

SDSURA’S FAVORITE BOOKS

For this “Books and Reading Matters” issue, we asked attendees of the 2017 Desert Escape and members of the SDSU Retirement Association Board to share lists of their favorite books. You will find their recommendations throughout the following pages. If you would like to share your favorite books with PostScript readers, send us your list and we will publish it in a future issue.
SDSURA SCHOLARS REPORT

Sean Hogan was one of our SDSU Retirement Association 2016/17 scholarship awardees. A Journalism major and Political Science minor, he is the nephew of Karen Peterson of the Chemistry and Biochemistry department. Below is his note of appreciation to SDSURA and a photo essay of his recent travels.

January 7, 2017

Dear SDSU Retirement Association,

Thank you so much for awarding me your scholarship. It was a great honor being chosen for an award by the SDSU Retirement Association. As many of you might remember, I had decided to study abroad in Tokyo. The scholarship money allowed me to participate in the overseas study program and helped me travel and survive in Japan. And for that, I thank you.

Sincerely,

Sean

FAVORITE BOOKS
A list from Dean Popp

Anna Karenina
Leo Tolstoy
Have read it a few times

The General Theory of Employment, Interest, and Money
John Maynard Keynes
Heavy economics but very important

The Economic Value of Education
Theodore Schultz
Basis for my dissertation

A Man Called Ove
Fredrik Backman
Heart warming

As Chimney Sweepers Come to Dust
Alan Bradley
One of a series of books, very easy and entertaining

FIVE FAVORITE BOOKS BY AND ABOUT WOMEN
A list from Maggi McKerrow

My Life on the Road
Gloria Steinem
A memoir

Vinegar Girl
Ann Tyler
A comic novel based on Shakespeare’s Taming of the Shrew

Trespasser
Tana French
A police procedural mystery set in Ireland

The Signature of All Things
Elizabeth Gilbert
A novel about a brilliant 19th century botanist

The Buddha in the Attic
Julie Otsuka
A poetic novel about Japanese brides immigrating to the USA
Ms. Corbett was the 5th grade Master Teacher when I attended the Campus Elementary School. Everyone knew that in the 5th grade we would be given the assignment of reading 100 books during the school year. I accepted this challenge not as a goal but as a requirement. I was already prepared because I was well versed in the Dewey Decimal System and the use of the public library as well as the elementary school library. I had many wonderful books on my list. One of my favorite books was *The Adventures of Remi* by Hector Malot. In conjunction with the reading assignment we were also given the assignment of picking a character from a book and a passage from the book and dressing up as the character and reciting a passage from the book. The audience, made up of student teachers and parents, tried to guess the book/character we were portraying. No one could guess my book/character. (See excerpt in sidebar.*)

Today, reading about Hector Malot’s contributions to civilization, I realize how blessed I was to have this experience of reading.

I subscribe to Netflix and yesterday I watched *Genius*, a 2016 movie with Jude Law as Thomas Wolfe and Colin Firth as Wolfe’s editor, Max Perkins. It brought back memories of reading *Look Homeward Angel* and *Of Time and the River*. I am reminded of Thomas Wolfe’s exuberant world of words that made reading his books so enjoyable.

I am in possession of two books which need to be published in some form. One was written by my aunt as a novel, called *Topping Out*, about her early days of school teaching in the Snake River wilds of Idaho when she was 16. There are delightful illustrations done by a Nez Perce Indian girl. The book was written in the 70’s and was self-published. The other book, about the civil war, was written by my grandfather in 1941, unpublished, titled, *Captain Monosmith, Dragoon*. It is interesting to me because there is a strong female heroine.

I have learned so much from reading. Reading has taken me beyond the person I am to the person I could be. Reading is reaching toward all of the possibilities of imagination.

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**FAVORITE BOOKS**

A list from Steve Barnes

*Journey to Ixtlan: The Lessons of Don Juan*
Carlos Castaneda

*Everett Ruess: His Short Life, Mysterious Death, and Astonishing Afterlife*
Philip L. Fradkin

*Desert Solitaire: A Season in the Wilderness*
Edward Abbey

*All the Pretty Horses*
Cormac McCarthy

*Philosophical Investigations*
Ludwig Wittgenstein

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*P. 270 The Adventures of Remi*

“The wide world was before me. I could turn my steps to any point of the compass: north, east, south, or west. My whim was master. I was a child, perhaps, but there was nobody to restrain me.

Alas! That was precisely what troubled me most.

How many children are thinking this very minute: Oh, if I could only do what I want to! If I were free and had no one to boss me! How many children look forward with impatience to that happy day when they can do just as many foolish things as they wish!

But I was saying to myself, “Oh, I would give anything in the world for some one to advise and direct me now!”

There was one terrible difference between those other youngsters and myself. If other children made mistakes, there was a hand near them to pick them up when they fell. But if I should tumble, I’d go clear to the bottom, and once there the only hand that would save me would be my own. But by that time I might be smashed and beyond saving.”

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We would like to thank Rob Ray and SDSU’s Love Library for permission to use the photograph on page 8. The image of Alvena Storm is courtesy of Love Library Special Collections and Archives.
If you have not yet heard of nor experienced OLLI, this article is for you!

Soon after Dean and I retired, we were introduced to OLLI, the Osher Life Long Learning Institute at SDSU. We started taking classes then and are continuing to take classes each semester. OLLI is housed within the College of Extended Studies at SDSU.

The courses at the SDSU OLLI are intellectually stimulating, university quality courses, but without tests or grades. Some classes meet only once and some are in a series of 3-8 class meetings. Among the myriad courses available, one or both of us have taken or are registered for, are courses about world religions; art history; the art of local cultures; Balboa Park history; current Supreme Court cases; book reviews; death, dying and grieving; fairness, equality, liberty and the Constitution; political cartooning with Steve Breen; Middle East politics, and religion. There are also classes about film, authors, and many, many more subject areas.

Edventures are another OLLI learning environment option. You may remember them as field trips. Edventures are classes taught at an off campus location that uniquely enhances the subject matter or experience with the subject. Locations have included restaurants, Balboa Park, Borrego Springs, and bridges in San Diego, to name a few. The excursion to Balboa Park with Nancy Carrol Carter revealed sculptures, history, and back stories about the founding of the park that gave new insights to this San Diego landmark.

The presenters/instructors are well-qualified to teach their subject matter and enjoy teaching in this unique environment. Why is it unique? Students have no motive to attend classes other than to learn, learn, learn. The student audience is made up of people 50 and better. There are retirees from various professions; people with storied life experiences; SDSU alums, faculty and staff; folks from across the country and the world. Can’t get much better than that! Courses are offered in Fall, Spring, and Summer semesters. Students may take one course per semester or as many as they like. Choosing which courses to take is always the hardest part.

If you’d like to see the classes and opportunities available from now through May, go online to neverstoplearning.net/OLLI. Catalogues are also available for each semester. The classroom facilities are great and the parking is close by and is provided by permit. There are 120 OL-LIs on college campuses throughout the country, all funded by The Bernard Osher Foundation and local member contributions. Our OLLI offers approximately 100 non-credit courses throughout the year. President Hirshman refers to the OLLI at SDSU as “…the university’s flagstaff community education program.”

We (yes, I said “we”) would like to expand our course offerings to include classes in Science, Mathematics, and art as well as continue to provide a range of courses in the Humanities. I am one of a number of people who volunteer on the Curriculum Committee at OLLI and serve on the Advisory Board. Volunteers contribute to the success of the institute in various roles including curriculum development, marketing, event planning, fund raising, serving on the advisory board and serving as Ambassadors for the program.

If you have questions and would like to hear more about taking classes or teaching classes at OLLI, you may reach me at spopp2@cox.net or 619-298-2840. If you are interested in submitting a proposal to teach in the OLLI program or are interested in becoming a volunteer, please contact Aimee Davis, Director, Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at 619-594-5674 or aimeedavis@mail.sdsu.edu. I encourage you to do one or both!

Summer classes will be announced soon. Watch for the class on outrigger canoes coming this summer!

I really hope to see you in a class at OLLI very soon.

AS RARE AS HEN’S TEETH...
Steve Dahms, Chemistry

In the late 70s, an article appeared in Science regarding the ability of a British lab to biochemically induce cultured chicken epithelial cells to undergo odontogenesis...whereby tooth buds formed in the culture.

This helped contribute to the growing paleontological evidence that birds are genetically related to reptiles and the perception that birds are really dinosaur relatives.

Now to the real story....

In 1982 SDSU molecular biologist Judith Zyskind hosted a multi-day visit to the campus of her mentor, Nobel Laureate Arthur Kornberg. As director of the Molecular Biology Institute (1974-92) I was asked by the Daily Aztec to brief a reporter on “…what is all this stuff called molecular biology...” I spent about 40 minutes discussing the exploration of these Elysian Shores, doing a fabulous job, I thought.

I went too far down the Yellow Brick Road and pointed out that we have many silent genes and fragments of ancient genes that are never expressed and told the reporter about the chicken odontogenesis story.

The next day’s Daily Aztec 200 pt font headlined issue was “San Diego State Scientists Clone the Genes for Hen’s Teeth.” Of course Kornberg was given a copy before our lunch...and it was not April 1.

I could not decide whether to be mortified or emasculated by Kornberg’s possible aberrant view of the campus but thankfully he thought it was hilarious.

William Burgess
Health Sciences
January, 2017

David Hoogland Johns
Political Science
February, 2017

IN MEMORIAM

Sharon Popp, SDSURA/OLLI

OLLI AT SDSU

Osher Lifelong Learning Institute

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IN MEMORIAM

William Burgess
Health Sciences
January, 2017

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February, 2017
VALENTINE’S DAY LUNCHEON, 2017
Deborah Quiett, Business and Financial Affairs

If you didn’t make it to the annual Valentine’s Lunch on 2/14/2017 you missed a wonderful time. There were a total of 72 in attendance—the Valentine’s Lunch is always one of our best-attended events. We always seem to have good weather and this day was no exception. The view of San Diego Bay was beautiful. The meal provided by the Bali Hai Restaurant was, as usual, excellent (the salmon in particular), topped off with a dessert of pineapple upside-down cake. Entertainment was provided by the Polka Dots, playing old favorites on their accordions. Pat and Jerry Koppman got things started on the dance floor. Soon others joined them including Pat Fritzenkotter, Lois Beland and her guest Tim, Joan and David McArthur, Dean and Sharon Popp, Tom and Karla Donahue, and Pat Coffey and Sandy Gaudur.

To top everything off, a total of $375 was collected toward our scholarship. Good job everybody!

WATER CONSERVATION GARDEN TOUR
Barbara Barnes, Enrollment Services

Fifteen SDSURA members and friends gathered on a warm and dry Sunday afternoon to enjoy a special tour of the Water Conservation Garden. Guiding our group were two SDSU emeritus faculty members—Dr. Bonnie Scott of Women’s Studies and Dr. Richard Wright of Geography. Both Professors Scott and Wright donate time and energy to support the mission of the garden—to teach and inspire through exhibits and programs that promote water conservation and the sustainable use of natural resources. As we strolled through the grounds, avoiding puddles left by recent rains, we were introduced to many of the garden’s fun and engaging features including the butterfly pavilion, outdoor amphitheater, and water-wise victory garden.

Prior to our tour, some of us gathered for a tasty Italian lunch at Rancho San Diego’s Arrivederci restaurant. Many thanks to Rick Schulte for planning the event and to Professors Scott and Wright for sharing their expertise. The garden is so lovely and its mission so valuable—we look forward to future visits!

FAVORITE BOOKS
A list from Rick Schulte

Captains & Kings
Taylor Caldwell

The Century Trilogy
Ken Follett

Guns, Germs, and Steel
Jared Diamond

A Road Less Travelled
Scott Peck

On Becoming a Person
Carl Rogers
Twenty years ago on a camping trip with my wife and dogs in the canyon lands of southern Utah, I found myself imagining an adventure/mystery/spiritual journey story of sorts. Over a period of a week, and numerous half-day hikes into the Escalante wilderness, the story began to gel, and so I told it to my companions. The dogs didn’t say much but my wife laughed and sighed at the right times and added her thoughts now and then to a very rough narrative.

Two years later we returned to the small town of Escalante prior to embarking on another four-wheel trip down Hole-in-the-Rock Road—visiting strange places like Devil’s Garden and Dance Hall Rock, and hiking into gulches with names like Spooky, Willow and Davis. We were a little more experienced this second time around, and our camping trip was exceptional—the red rock canyons, stream beds lined with cottonwoods, glimpses of Lake Powell, the Mormon history that dominates the region, the mystery surrounding Everett Ruess (a young vagabond who disappeared in the area during the 1930s). I hadn’t thought at all about my fictional adventure story since the original visit but, sure enough, it popped right back into focus when I began inhaling the dry desert air.

Upon returning to San Diego I outlined the story but put it aside for the next fifteen years. Two years ago, with both time and a place (a new home office space in our remodeled garage) I began in earnest. Although I had the basic story down, the most interesting and engaging stuff appeared at the front door of my imagination as I wrote, like an out-of-town houseguest. This was followed by rewriting and more rewriting, moving chapters around, tweaking descriptions, removing stupid stuff, and fantasizing about creating the next “great American novel.”

After about eleven months, writing at least half a day for at least five days a week, the novel appeared to be completed. I leaned on friends and friends of friends to read and comment. (These are called “beta readers” in the trade.) Nearly everyone liked it overall but had one criticism or another—some sections were too violent, too technical, too this or that. I was pleased with the poetry I included at the end of key chapters; some readers found it distracted from the plot. O.K., another major revision was undertaken.

In January of 2016 I signed up for my first Writers’ Conference ($500), attending workshops on novel writing and book publishing, rubbing elbows with budding authors of all stripes, and meeting for ten minute sessions with editors and agents who read and critiqued ten pages of my novel. I came away with a good understanding of how to write a query letter to potential book agents, but also with the realization that very few first-time authors get book deals this way—perhaps as low as two percent.

I spent most of 2016 sending out query letters—at least 60-70—but the response was always a rejection. Here’s a sampling: “Your novel did not speak to me.” “Thank you but we are not taking on any more writers at this time.” “Thanks so much for your interest in our agency. Please understand that owing to the volume of queries we receive, we are able to respond further only to those that interest us.” “Thank you for submitting to Prentis Literary and for allowing me the opportunity to review your work. Unfortunately, we will not be requesting more material at this time. Please keep in mind we accept less than 1% of submitted work and the decision-making process is always difficult.”

In January of 2017 I attended my second Writer’s Conference (another $500). This time around I was more interested in interacting with agents and editors than attending receptions and workshops. By chance I met an executive editor who was intrigued by my novel. She was between jobs and agreed to read and critique my novel ($1,000). She has cashed my check but has yet to get back to me. She lives in New York.

If you elect to enter the world of fiction you will find a remarkable avalanche of books, audiotapes, CD’s, workshops, and writer’s conferences with open arms. This is big business, not just the publishing part but also the pre-publishing part. Given my experience to date I really do not know very much about how to get a novel published and realize my reward may lie in the joy of writing and the satisfaction of telling a good story. It is a good story.

Editor’s Note: If you would like to read Howling at the Moon you can contact Steve at sbarnes@mail.sdsu.edu

RECOMMENDED BOOKS
A list from Barbara Van Meter

Rain of Gold
Victor Villaseñor

City of Thieves
David Benioff

The House Girl
Tara Conklin

The John Corey Collection: Plum Island, The Lion’s Game and Night Fall
Nelson Demille

Earth’s Children series
Jean M. Auel
REMEmBERING ALVENA STORM: INTREPID EXPLOREr
Leoné McCoy, Secondary Education

Take a moment, if you will, to look back at our summer 2016 issue of the PostScript, and you will be treated again to Barbara Barnes’ geometrically bold and visually striking photo cover, featuring Storm Hall. It immediately put me in mind of remembering the amazing Alvena Storm, Professor Emerita, who taught in our Department of Geography for 40 years, and for whom the building was named.

Alvena had retired before I became acquainted with her, but I had the great good fortune to come to know her in her time of retirement, she then in her 90’s. When we were first introduced, Alvena and I shared facts about our Northern California roots, and we were delighted to learn that she and my mother were both UC Berkeley graduates, classes of 1925 and 1926, respectively.

I was invited to meet Alvena Storm at her Point Loma home by one of her former students Betty Quayle, a local educator and archivist. She and her husband, Louis Quayle were devoted to Alvena, Louis having been her reader and teaching assistant. To her immense satisfaction, Louis was also a dedicated explorer, often accompanying her and her students on their arduous, but rewarding backcountry field trips.

Alvena was known for her indefatigable spirit and intense curiosity about our geologically contoured county. I found her to be tough-minded, but tender-hearted and endearing. I learned that there were never too many miles for her to hike and lead her students to discover some hidden dry creek bed or watershed ravine or possibly a wondrous outcropping, overgrown and laced with chaparral. Although she and her husband were longtime members of the San Diego Yacht Club and enjoyed sailing our coastal bays and escarpments, Alvena had lost her heart to the mystery and beauty of our land’s interiors.

Overtime, exploring this southwestern terrain on foot, Alvena shared her probing inquisitiveness with other prominent San Diegans. She enjoyed a builder’s knack with Louis Quayle’s grandfather and father who were important local architects. (They designed the original San Diego police headquarters, now a museum on the Embarcadero.) She wanted to make a lasting impression, like the star-rated sculptor Donal Hord, who was known for personally hauling local stone and chiseling it into the dynamic form of our beloved sculpture Monty, now housed in our Alumni Center. (It, too, was featured in a recent cover photo of the PostScript...so powerful and beautiful a picture that it took my breath away.) Alvena’s knowledge of botanicals connected her with Kate Sessions, the legendary horticulturist who helped put Balboa Park on the global map. Just stop and imagine the conversations among them, their minds on fire, igniting each other’s work to new heights.

On one of our visits to her home, Alvena treated Betty and me to a rich retelling of some of her San Diego State experiences, as she directed us around her dining room, where hung a number of enlarged and smartly framed photographs of the day and ceremony of the naming of Storm Hall, when she was the featured guest. She was unabashedly proud of this honor, as were we of this singular tribute. It was almost allegorically appropriate, as if she had been given her own mountain to explore.

As we were about to take our leave that afternoon, Alvena Storm was at her most affecting and revealed an almost girlish manner, defying the fact that she would in a few years’ time revel in her own centennial celebration. She excitedly invited us to return soon again to share more about the rich geography of the land she so loved and called home. Then in 2003, Alvena Storm, the intrepid explorer, set out to meet the Great Geographer, as she reached the humbling age of 101.

FAvORITE BOOK
From Lucille Wendling

On Heroic Wings: Stories of the Distinguished Flying Cross
Barry Lanman & Laura Wendling

LEST WE FORGET...WE invite all of our readers to consider writing about colleagues past, certainly not eulogies; rather; meanderings, reminders for those who knew the subject and personal memories for those who do not.
He was an outstanding researcher and teacher whose greatest legacy is the large number of individuals trained in his laboratories, scattered throughout the world, who remain to this day living reminders of his scholarship and intellect.

He joined SDSU in 1964 and was one of the founding faculty of the SDSU Molecular Biology Institute and one of the key, core faculty in the SDSU PhD program in Chemistry (the first PhD program in the 23 campus California State University System) and the PhD Program in Cell and Molecular Biology, both joint with USCD. His research was supported throughout his career by the California Metabolic Research Foundation and the National Institutes of Health, and he held the responsibility for supporting researchers in San Diego County prior to his retirement in 2002.

His colleagues have noted not only his elegant scholarship and his lifelong competitive drive in uncovering and studying intricacies of mother nature but also his thoughtful, caring, and gentlemanly bearing, especially in mentoring students and serving as a model for junior faculty, as well for graduate students who have gone on to their own professorships.

HOW I CROSSED THE TIBER—GUIDEBOOK IN HAND
Bill Pease, Library

The books that have most influenced my life are not ones that casual friends might guess. As an introspective and lonely teenager—and perhaps impacted by the earlier death of an infant brother and then of my mother—I sought out a philosophical scaffold. I had already read the whole Bible given me at age ten. In adolescence, first considering myself an atheist, I read the Book of Mormon; Science and Health, by Mary Baker Eddy; the Communist Manifesto and all sorts of ideological magazines that came my way. All had their attractions and yet … So it was that I came across the works of John Henry Newman, Apologia pro Vita Sua, and The Grammar of Assent. Newman, a prominent 19th century theologian in the Church of England, converted to Roman Catholicism.

After him I resorted to the scholarly 15-volume Catholic Encyclopedia. I soon was reading the writings of G. K. Chesterton and other like-minded, mostly British essayists. (Thomas Aquinas and Thomas Merton would come later.) Dorothy Day, a left-wing journalist who founded a network of pacifist communities, was a further influence and became an acquaintance years later. So it was at 16, with my father’s puzzled permission, I took instructions to enter the Catholic Church. In that era it was a private, almost secretive procedure. Even the priests who provided my instructions must have found me a little odd, someone who read his way into the church. Most of their other inquirers were performative “marrying into” the church. When I had visited other denominations, I was bothered by some greeter wanting to shake my hand. The Catholic mass of that era was not a sociable event; one could slip into the event and pray in solitude.

If I was charmed by the outward constancy and close system of Catholicism, I soon discovered an inner dynamism, centuries of tension and debate, not publicized to—indeed hidden from—the average parishioner. It is this strained vitality that has shown me through. (For some years I turned to a more comfortable church home and then left, not like others who believed too little, but because I believed too much.) As I evolve, so does the Catholic Church. Some would consider me a “cafeteria Catholic”—a phrase that overlooks the fact that everyone has to construct his or her own philosophical matrix from whatever sources life provides.

Retrograde, nostalgic forces are always at work in my religious lodging, but so is a mysticism that expresses itself in social justice and spiritual surprise. I demur on some catechetical points that I find inconsistent with the Gospel, but my prayer life and my appreciation for being alive continue to be nourished by this schizophrenic institution, anchored in Rome.

FAVORITE BOOKS
A list from Betty Broom
We have a retired nursing faculty book group. Here are five of our favorites (among many!):

The Help
Kathryn Stocket

Nineteen Minutes
Jodi Picoult

All the Light We Cannot See
Anthony Doerr

The Nine: Inside the Secret World of the Supreme Court
Jeffrey Toobin

The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks
Rebecca Skloot

(for the medical scientists out there)

For any women thinking about starting a book group, consider starting with:

Angry Housewives Eating Bon Bons
by Loma Landrik
The spectacular bloom of wild flowers in the Anza Borrego Desert was not the only super bloom to be found in Borrego Springs the middle of March. Your SDSU Retirement Association experienced its own wonderful bloom of conversation, connections and camaraderie as 35 members plus a few drop-in guests traveled to the desert to celebrate the RA’s 26th annual Borrego Desert Escape from Tuesday, March 14 through Friday morning, the 17th.

Although we were sadly missing a number of familiar faces (most notably former longtime Wagon Masters Pat & Jerry Koppman), it was a delight to welcome eight first-timers including Glen and Betty Broom, Steve and Judy Dahms, Jim and Carol Dietz (all the way from their home in Oregon), Barbara and Edvard Hemingsen, Frea Sladek and Jim Feeney, Anne Taylor, and Barbara Van Meter.

Many thanks go out to all who proved the old adage “many hands make light work” in meal preparation and cleanup for three dinners and three breakfasts. Special kudos go to Ann Burgess for margaritas, her secret recipe waffles (two mornings) and luscious smoothies and to Barbara Barnes for leading the “eggs-in-a-bag” breakfast crew on Thursday morning. We celebrated St. Patrick’s Day that evening with the not-quite-as-usual “corned beef caper” with all the usual accompaniments, a little sing-along of Irish melodies and plenty of enthusiastic conversation.

Many of you 2017 Desert Escapers have posted wonderful photos on our SDSU Retirement Association Facebook page which illustrate many of the usual Borrego activities. These include the usual strolls or hikes along desert floor and canyons to view the myriad flowers blooming and the fantastical, whimsical metal sculpture creatures; socializing over meals while meeting old and new friends; reading or just lazing by the pool; and a little golf under a sweltering sun for a hardy few. To view more of these pictures, check out the SDSU Retirement Association Facebook page. If you are a Facebook subscriber but not yet a member of the RA page, email Ron Young (see box at left).

Planning has begun for next year so save the dates—Tuesday, March 13 through Friday, March 16.

Many thanks to photographers Glen Broom, Pat Coffey, Judy Dahms, Rick Schulte, Barbara Van Meter, Ron Young, and Barbara Barnes for sharing images they took of people, critters, sculptures, food and activities during Desert Escape. Their photos appear in the collage on the next page.
Edmond arrested for being an agent of an unpopular political faction. Eventually Edmond was moved from a local prison to a permanent one, made up only of dungeons, from which no one had ever escaped.

One day Edmond heard a scratching sound on one of the walls of his cell. It turned out to be a fellow prisoner trying to escape and thinking he was scratching on an outside wall. The prisoner was a brilliant learned elderly man who claimed to the authorities that he possessed a vast fortune, which he would gladly turn over to the authorities in exchange for his freedom. He was the Abbé Faria who they thought was crazy for claiming to have such a vast fortune! As they got to know each other, Faria revealed to Edmond how much he had accomplished while a prisoner and the many clever ways he had concealed it. Through clever logic he was even able to figure out who had framed Edmond and how they had concealed it. He taught Edmond history, mathematics, astronomy, chemistry, physics, and four foreign languages. Edmond was enamored of everything he was taught, and learned every item.

Several months later the abbé had a cataleptic fit and almost died. After several days and a few more fits, but before he died, he gave Edmond a precise map of the island of Monte Cristo and where the treasure was buried. The treasure was in a couple of chests and consisted of ingots, gold, money, jewels, diamonds, gems—two millions of Roman crowns. The abbé finally died and Edmond hid the abbé’s body in his own bed and sewed himself into the canvas sack that had been prepared for the corpse.

The prison had no cemetery. Two of the jailers took the bagged ‘corpse’ to the edge of a cliff and threw it into the Mediterranean sea. Edmund had concealed a knife and cut himself loose. He swam a ways and when about to give up from cold, exhaustion, and hunger, was picked up by a small vessel which eventually took him to Monte Cristo. He followed the abbé’s map and found the fortune!

Edmond had already decided to return to his home area and avenge his enemies, all three of whom had become wealthy by various nefarious dealings. And worst of all, Fernand had tricked Merce’d’es into marrying him and bearing his children.

Edmund, now wealthy and well educated, took the name Monte Cristo and the title of Count. Through clever dealings, he managed to turn his enemies into paupers and even suicidal. In his final communication he said that “all human wisdom is contained in these two words—Wait and hope.”

FAVORITE BOOKS
A list from Pat Koppman

The Help
Kathryn Stockett

The Notebook
Nicholas Sparks

Still Alice
Lisa Genova

Every year I read the Newbery and Caldecott winners for that year. These are children’s books but they help me keep up with outstanding children’s literature and authors. The 2016 winner was Last Stop on Market Street written by Matt de la Peña. These books are wonderful read-a-louds to your grandchildren.
CHECKING IT TWICE—NAUGHTY OR NICE—KEEPING A BOOK JOURNAL
Maggi McKerrow, Theatre

In 2010, inspired by a friend, I started keeping a list of all the books I read. I had contemplated such a list for years, but never quite got the energy to start. Somehow that June—just like going on a better eating regime—the time was right. Before starting I had to make decisions. On paper or on computer? Definitely on paper. On trips abroad I take along a small (5” x 7”) journal, make entries every day and use double-sticky tape to put in postcards to remind me where I was. It is a ritual I love so I went right out and bought a similar new Peter Pauper journal with a smart black and white cover. Such nice acid free paper. Just right for my new project! I stocked up on my favorite pens which are Uni Ball Vision Elite. Real black ink and they don’t leak on airplanes. It’s quirky but with those nice pens I print, no cursive for me—a habit formed years ago when I realized students couldn’t read my handwritten comments on their papers. I have printed for so long you might say I have become a printing speed demon. A really useful skill I could have used when I was in college myself and taking notes.

Starting the project. June 28, 2010. On the front page of my journal I boldly wrote my name, the date, and my phone number. (It’s a compulsion: a safety precaution developed at theatre rehearsals. Everybody has an identical script. You need to hang on to the one with your notes or you are lost.) That part was easy. The first book journal entry was not. The pages looked . . . . . blank . . . . . what was I going to write? The book title and the author were obvious. What else? Big pause for thinking. Hmmmhh? Time passed. More deep thinking. Inspiration! I raced around the house checking book shelves, racked my brain for memorable books borrowed from the library or loaned to friends, then, on the first page of my journal, neatly printed the title and author of twelve books I recalled reading in the last six months. In a flourish I rated them with stars. 1 for awful. 5 for terrific. What a feeling of accomplishment. I had begun a real book journal. Who cared about the books I had forgotten? The future is what counts.

Dear Reader. I Kept it Up. Almost seven years and counting. Actually I am now well into Book Journal #2 which is identical to #1. As of today 392 books. My entry technique has evolved. At first it was a puzzle to figure out what to write. I wanted to keep it simple, but title and author didn’t seem to be enough. Currently I include: 1. The date I finished the book. 2. The complete title. 3. The author’s name. 4. The number of pages. 5. Two or three sentences describing what the book is about and my reaction to it. For some forgotten reason I quickly dumped the star system. Too judgmental I guess. While occasionally I get behind I have faithfully made an entry for every book read since that time. It makes me take time to reflect. It has become another ritual.

Unexpectedly my book journal has turned out to be really useful. If asked about a book I think I read I whip it out and look it up. It has become my ‘go to’ source for author or book recommendations. I check it if I want to give a book as a gift, or need a pick for my book club. Actually I am quite proud of myself for keeping it up. If only I was quite so perfect in other aspects of my life . . . . .

A couple of years ago I realized that my data could use an alternate organization system. If I wanted to look something up I had to flip through a lot of pages. Time consuming. So, a month or so ago, I embarked on entering all the data into a spread sheet on my computer. The data I enter are not quite the same as my journal. Title, Author, Genre, Setting, Comments. It is a time consuming and probably foolish project. Looking good though. I’m only up to book #200, but already can search by author, title, genre. Let me see. How many books about England have I read? How many memoirs? Biographies? How many books by Henning Mankell? What fun is that! To be honest, I suspect I am possessed with the idea of book journal. I encourage friends who love books to start one. You can too. It requires discipline and can take up some of your valuable reading time, but the rewards are plentiful. Go for it.

FIVE FAVORITE ‘ROAD BOOKS’ OLD AND NEW
Maggi McKerrow

1841. The Old Curiosity Shop by Charles Dickens
Dickens explores the effect of the industrial revolution on English countryside as Little Nell and her grandfather escape from London.

1955. Lolita by Vladimir Nabokov
This masterpiece gave Nabokov an opportunity to vividly describe 1950’s America as Humbert takes to the road obsessed with Lolita.

2005. River of Doubt by Candice Millard
A gripping tale of Theodore Roosevelt’s 1912 journey down a tributary of the Amazon River. He almost died.

2014. Station Eleven by Emily St. John Mandel
A dystopian novel about life in the USA after a flu kills off almost everybody. We follow a theatre company “on the road” in Michigan.

2015. Last Bus to Wisdom by Ivan Doig
Charming novel about teenage Donal’s adventure filled Greyhound Bus trip across the USA in the early 1950’s. Doig’s final book.
CALPERS INVESTMENT IN PRIVATE EQUITY: SENTIMENTAL OR INSTRUMENTAL MOTIVES?
Tom Donahue, CSU-ERFA Representative

Reports from December of 2016 (by the Pensions and Investments Newsletter and by Reuters) show that CalPERS is reducing the money in its private equity firms from 10% to 8% of its overall portfolio. The reasons for this move, given by Ted Eliopoulos, CalPERS chief investment officer, were based on the facts that the returns from such firms have been diminishing lately, and at the same time fees for their services remain very high.

Of considerable interest is the early story by Yves Smith in the on-line journal Naked Capitalism (November 15, 2116) which reports that CalPERS is considering a strongly developed private equity initiative on its own, so that middle-men firms can be avoided entirely. Many people are unaware of the aggressively utilitarian and tunnel-vision business practices of such firms, but a recent New York Times article by Michael Corkery and Ben Protess on December 11, 2016 brings those practices out in the open. The story told of the actions of the Apollo Global Management and Metropoulos and Company (hereafter A and M) and gives an account of that firm’s strategic moves in acquiring the Hostess Company, the baker of the Twinkies confection. First, A and M waited until the company declined and neared bankruptcy in recent years; the company was then acquired for $183 million. A and M then reduced the workforce throughout the company generally, and cut the pay of those remaining. Pension plans and previous benefits were scrapped. They continued by removing the previous delivery system, preferring to ship by other carriers. As the new way of doing business approached profitability, A and M shut down older regional bakeries. Upon achieving profitability with the company, A and M borrowed the sum of $1.3 billion from Credit Suisse, encumbering Hostess with that sum as a carried debt. The borrowed money was then used not in service to Hostess, but instead as dividend recapitalization, the term for a sum that was paid out to investors, and as bonus awards to A and M executives (the chair of Apollo received $182 million in 2015). Hostess was then sold to the Gores Group of Los Angeles, which uses the profits from the company to pay current investors with money forwarded as carried interest, which is taxable as income at approximately a 20% rate.

One may easily see that these are extraordinarily sharp and in fact highly adventurous business practices. It might help if we take a more categorical view of this matter. Political scientists contrast instrumental motives, which emphasize the end results of any social or political action, with sentimental motives, which focus on the means by which the result is achieved. An instrumentalist would say in the Hostess case that reducing expenditure for the work force, planned dividend recapitalization, and carried interest are necessary to simplify the business and to make the company more attractive to investors. A sentimentalist would say that reducing expenditure for the work force in this case is a business move that was cherished only in the very earliest stages of capitalism and is attempted since only by the most vicious business people. Further, planned dividend recapitalization is a basic deal-from-the-bottom-of-the-deck move, while carried interest is designed merely to provide investors with access to a contrived loophole, a special tax rate benefit from present but temporary tax laws. It is of interest that CalPERS’ recent abandonment of tobacco stocks could be characterized as stemming from a sentimentalist motive to get away from investing in an addictive substance which is lethal over time. We understand at present that the price of entry for CalPERS to hire such firms is too high, and apparently despite their swashbuckling practices the firms’ success rate is too low. But in checking the website for its reported involvement in private equity firms, one sees that there are 258 firms now working with CalPERS money. The future of these cannot be accurately predicted and it would be naive to hope that the plangent virtues we were all taught in childhood would entirely win the day—but we may watch to see whether the ultimate result will come predominantly from instrumentalist or sentimentalist motives.

TREASURER’S REPORT
Deborah Quiett, Treasurer

SDSU Retirement Association Accounts as of 3/15/2017

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A FAVORITE READ
From Tom Donahue

The Ginger Man
J. P. Donleavy
A guilty pleasure

FAVORABLE BOOKS
A list from Deborah Quiett

State of Wonder
Ann Patchett

The No. 1 Ladies Detective Agency Series
Alexander McCall Smith

The Hobbit and
The Lord of the Rings Trilogy
J. R. R. Tolkien

A Walk in the Woods
Bill Bryson

Anything by John Grisham and David Baldacci
In the summer of 1951 my family sailed to the United States traveling Cabin Class on the Queen Mary. What an adventure! I was eleven. We came because my father was starting a branch of the insurance firm he worked for in London. His office was in downtown Chicago and we lived in a rented house in the suburb of Park Ridge, Illinois. Population 16,500 as proclaimed on signs all over town. In September my brother and I started school. I went into the 7th grade at Lincoln Junior High School. A new kid with a funny accent. It was quite an adjustment. England was still recovering from WW II. Food was still rationed. Life was pretty grim I guess, but since we had never known anything else I don’t think my brother or I really noticed. However, we quickly adjusted to the plentiful food and more colorful world of suburban Chicago. In retrospect I suspect we adjusted much more quickly than my mother did.

I realize now that that was when I started my Bucket List—though that is certainly not what I would have called it. Every week a British news magazine called The Illustrated London News arrived in the mail at our house. I don’t know if my parents subscribed or if somebody sent it to my father’s office, but I do know that I read it avidly. I just looked it up online and discovered that the magazine was started in 1842, published weekly until 1971, then monthly until 2003. I guess it covered recent news, but the part I liked best were the articles about archeological discoveries, prehistoric people, graves, bones, dirt, adventure. Is this where I first saw photos of Egyptian and Mexican Pyramids, King Tut tomb contents, Giant Standing Stone Circles, Machu Picchu, Skara Brae? I suspect it is. I saw those pictures and I wanted to go too. My bucket list is all about travel to sites where you can see the way ancient men (and women) lived. I’ve visited the Pyramids, marveled at the beauty of wall paintings in tombs in the Valley of the Kings, been wind blown around magnificent standing circles in Scotland, clambered all over Machu Picchu, wondered at ancient apartment life in Skara Brae. My life has been rich. Lucky me to achieve goals established in my teens.

What about you? We want to know what is on your bucket list. Write an article about it. How did you develop the list? Where did it send you? What did you accomplish? Send pictures. Send us your list. Please share. We are eager to hear your story.

Coming in the Next PostScript
Bucket Lists. Things to Do Before you Die.
Maggi McKerrow, Theatre

Maggi and stone circles on the island of Lewis/Harris in the Hebrides

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Layout and Design Barbara Barnes
Save the Date

Spring Luncheon, April 27
Day at the Theatre, April 30
Kentucky Derby Party, May 7
Day at the Races, July 20

COMING IN THE NEXT POSTSCRIPT

What’s on YOUR Bucket List?

Left: Conrad Prebys Student Union viewed from the quad between Student Services West and Manchester Hall. Formerly planted in lawns, water-wise landscaping is now in place and there is comfortable seating throughout the area.

DEADLINE: July 10, 2017

Please email your double-spaced article of approximately 400-500 words to whitesagecafe@aol.com. If you have no access to a computer, mail your typed or clearly printed article to 4829 Beaumont Drive, La Mesa, CA 91941. Scanned photos may be sent as an attachment or mail photos to Barbara Barnes at the above address. Photos are appreciated and will be returned.

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