

# THE GREY PANTHER

Newsletter of the Emeritus and Retired Faculty of Chapman University



## Letter from the Editor

This letter comes to you in some very uncertain and difficult times. We probably are all following the rules of self-isolation. Hopefully all of us are also remaining COVID-19 free. Since I have not heard of anyone of us being stricken, as they say “no news is good news.” How long we will have to remain isolated is unknown, but I am sure that it will be much longer than any of us would wish.

Although during the inconvenience and social deprivation we are suffering, we must not forget our healthcare workers and first responders who are risking their lives in their efforts to defeat this invisible enemy. I am acutely aware of this given that my daughter, a surgical resident in Atlanta, is on the front line of this battle. She is working twelve hour shifts for seven days and then being given seven days off (just enough time to determine if she has acquired the virus) as a member of an ICU unit. Several of her friends have tested positive with one becoming seriously ill.

Our efforts at isolation are our way of keeping this pandemic from being worse than it already is.

Send comments to: [kpreitz@gmail.com](mailto:kpreitz@gmail.com)

## New from the Working Group

The current members of the Working Group are Tom Hall, Anita Storck, Karl Reitz, Joe Matthews, John Koshak, Claudia Horn, Virginia Carson, Jay Boylan, Heather Terjung, Suzanne-SooHoo, Jeff Cogan, Judy Montgomery and Penny Bryan.

Given the circumstances, the Working Group had to postpone the tour of the Rinker Campus until some later date. We have also cancelled our bimonthly in-person meetings. We have tentatively set mid-October for our annual fall luncheon. We are currently discussing possible speakers. If anyone has a suggestion please let one of us know.

One of areas that we are working on is to have a document that definitively lays out the rights and benefits of professors emeriti. It seems that different faculty are being told different things. We would like to make sure that there is a uniform agreed upon understanding for all groups.

We also are moving to institute a service project. One of the suggested projects was to assist with the student food bank. We welcome other suggestions.

## Book Review

Kristof, Nicholas & Wu Dunn, Sheryl. (2020).  
*Tightrope: Americans reaching for hope.*  
 New York: Knopf.

New York Times columnist Nicholas Kristof has returned to his hometown of Yamhill, Oregon many times over the years—the family farm is still there and gives him and his wife a place of respite when needed.

More recently, though, it also gave them an idea for a book, their fifth: *Tightrope* is the result. Using Yamhill as their starting point, the Pulitzer-winning couple then traveled all fifty states gathering stories to illustrate their two main points: first, that poverty cannot be blamed solely on bad choices made by individuals but is made almost inevitable by systemic forces within American society. Second, that the deeply ingrained notion that anyone can “pull themselves up by their bootstraps” if they only work hard and play by the rules is a pernicious myth. It too often leaves good men and women not only poor and desperate, but convinced of their own worthlessness. The hollowed-out towns and small cities of the USA no longer sustain a decent quality of life; drugs, prison, and suicide are the more common stories now.

And the bootstraps myth is a lie in another sense: those who were (and are) able to move into the middle and upper classes did so not by their own efforts alone, but with the help of government policies: The pioneers didn’t buy covered wagons and roll toward Oregon purely as actions of individual initiative; they headed for the Oregon country because the Preemption Act of 1841, the Homestead Act and the territory’s local laws allowed them to become farm owners. For landless workers in the East, it was a huge attraction that under local rules any white person who arrived in Oregon could mark off a square mile, improve it with buildings or fences, and then gain ownership just by living on it. The result was disastrous for Native Americans living in the area but created the basis for a large landed middle class. The Homestead Act was later supplemented with public education, land-grant universities, rural electrification and subsidies for home buyers and university students in the G. I. Bill of Rights. Time after time, government provided escalators, citizens jumped on board and America benefited. Yet in recent decades, that

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## News from our Members

Earl Babbie reports “Yesterday was my 12th anniversary with Suzanne, marking the happiest period of my life. Today was day three of our CV-19 seclusion, and we are enjoying just being with each other. So far, we are feeling great and plan to keep it that way.”

## Appreciating Art

by Judy Montgomery

Step off the train at the Orange Metrolink Train Station, Tuesday through Saturday after 11:00 am and you enter a world of art called the Hilbert Museum. An amazing collection of watercolors, oils, acrylics, and ever-changing displays of photos, pottery, and glass-enclosed cases awaits. The Hilbert Museum is the personal art collection that Mark and Janet Hilbert acquired over a 25-year period in the US and Europe, and beyond. They gifted many pieces to the museum. I didn’t know The Hilbert was going to have such a profound effect on me, but it did.

I am not an artist. In fact, I have been a professor of Speech Language Pathology at Chapman University for the last 26 years. However, I have always enjoyed all types of art, even those outrageously-framed paintings seemed to communicate to me in a totally different way. I retired from Chapman University in June 2019 and was thrilled to learn that my retirement party would be staged at the Hilbert! What a dream... to celebrate with my professional friends from surrounding universities, family, my always inspiring CU faculty friends, and especially the graduate students whom I mentored for all those years! We were all together surrounded by the art at the Hilbert for this delightful event.

There was always a strong pull for me to visit the Hilbert, again and again. I liked to gaze at the new exhibits, re-visit my favorites, have the curator, Mary Platt, point out new pieces with entrancing stories. But then I took it a step further. When I heard that the museum was seeking docents, I signed up for the twelve-hour docent training session! Me- an art docent! I couldn’t stop talking

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sympiosis has faded, and now it's time for America to get back into the escalator business. (p. 250)

The book isn't all gloom and doom, however. Everywhere they went, Kristof and Wu Dunn also found pockets of resilience and stories of local people finding ways to help their communities thrive in the face of long odds. They close with a list of ways that new government policies could reverse the dysfunction that began with Kristof's generation—his childhood friends—and is cascading down through their children and grandchildren, creating an ever-deepening sense of futility that damages our entire social fabric.

They show, too, that corporate self-interest going forward may well be tied to more enlightened structural changes—profit-sharing, on the job training, in-house child care, and much more. Acknowledging that such changes won't be easy—either for government or for business, they close with the warning that ...funds will be scarce, particularly as we have to dig ourselves out of debt and deficits. These proposals also do not address the political distortions that lead to a rigged economy. We do need to take steps to make our political system more responsive to ordinary citizens and less attentive to large donors and lobbyists. Making voting easier would also help. (p. 260)

I recommend this book and am pleased to contribute a copy to the Friends House library.  
Barbara Tye

## Spring Flowers: Ben Dial's Garden

by Karl Reitz

For a gardener, spring is a time when we get our rewards. Our work of planning, running to the nursery, planting, pruning, weeding and watering comes to fruition with a profusion of new growth and blooms. My wife and I are being honored this spring with an incredible display of ceanothus blooms (wild lilacs) from at least six varieties. Some of them finished blooming a few weeks ago and some are just starting. Their colors are different shades of bright blue. but one called Snow Flurry (appropriately) is pure white. Our fuchsia flowering gooseberry, San Clemente bush mallow, bush snapdragon, black sage, Oregon grape and hummingbird sage are all in bloom. Yet to come are a wide variety of sages, buckwheats, sunflowers and other native plants. Two years ago after purchasing our home in San Clemente, we decided to landscape in California native plants. We hired a landscape designer who specializes in native gardens and our adventure began. We now have over sixty species planted in our yard. A few of our plants were here when we purchased our home including a large Oregon grape (mahonia), several ceanothus bushes, and several large lemonade berry bushes that border the property. We have been inspired by several garden tours sponsored by the Thomas Paine Foundation (in Los Angeles) and the California Native Plant Society (here in Orange County). We also make frequent trips to our nearby native plant nursery, The Tree of Life Nursery

about the art. I began to take small groups or individuals around the museum on "my days". What a joy. I invited my retired friends, my neighbor, my grad students, my house guest visiting from Maryland, to stroll through the recent Los Angeles Area Scene Painting exhibition. We'd walk to lunch afterward at one of the quaint, and always delicious, restaurants on the Orange Plaza, still chatting about our favorite piece, questioning if there were really more than 200 people painted into Phil Dike's Sunday Afternoon in the Plaza de los Angeles, 1939.

I hope you decide to spend an hour or two at the Hilbert Museum, 167 N. Atchison St in Orange. Just steps from the Metrolink Train Station. You will likely meet the museum director, Mary Platt, or Jill, the Docent director... or maybe I will be there, or one of my fellow docents, talking about how a painting brightens my day, or makes me think in a new way. Admission is free. Parking is free in front of the museum, and one block away at the Old Town West parking structure. Tues-Sat. 11 am- 5 pm. More Information - 714-516-5880. Hope to see you there!





off Ortega highway. We are members the Orange County section of the California Native Plant Society.

There are other kinds of plants and seeds that grow and flourish, not just the usual kinds. As professors we hope we plant and nourish the love of learning and appreciation of not only our natural world, but also of the world of ideas and creative endeavors. While living in a house across the road from Chino Hills State

Park, I was privileged to serve as chair of Chapman's Science Division. Having been a long time supporter of environmentalism, I became interested in the growing field of Environmental Science and believed that such a program would be of interest to our students. Even though we had no professors trained explicitly in Environmental Science, I believed that we had the expertise to offer a beginning course. I had an interest in the impact of society on the environment so I felt I could offer some expertise to such a course. I sought out two other professors who also could offer their talents. Michael Griffin (one of our members) as a chemist had expertise in toxicology and Ben Dial was a biologist specializing in ecology. Together we decided we would offer Chapman's first course in Environmental Science. Since this was a team-taught class, we pledged to attend each others lectures and as a result I think I learned as much or more than the students.

Much of what I learned was as the result of my interactions with Ben Dial. His research involved lizards that are found in the Big Bend area of Texas. One of his papers was published in the premier journal "Nature." The paper definitively and cleverly proved that the Lamarckian theory of evolution was wrong. While doing field work in Texas one summer, Ben contracted an infection that severely damaged his heart and kept him bedridden. At one point he was accepted into the heart transplant program at Stanford University (which coincidentally was headed by my cousin Dr. Ben Reitz) where he received a new heart which allowed him to teach many more years.

One day, in conversation with my team members, I mentioned the fact that a rattlesnake had wandered into my yard and since I had children that played in the yard, I killed it. Ben was very upset with me and told me how important the Pacific Rattler was to the coastal ecosystem. I said, "OK then teach me how to capture a rattlesnake." He did. He took me down to his lab which housed a variety of live reptiles and showed me how to handle venomous snakes. The next time I discovered a rattle snake in my yard, I did as Ben had taught me and captured it, put it into a sun-tea jar and brought it in to add to Ben's collection. Years later it had grown into a full size beautifully marked Pacific Rattle Snake. Af-

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ter my first capture of a rattlesnake I had many more encounters which resulted in only a couple of deaths when the snakes were a bit recalcitrant.

One day, during one of Ben's lectures on land based ecosystems, he mentioned the fact that California chaparral was a member of a type of plant community called the Mediterranean ecosystem which exists in only a few places on earth. He explained that this ecosystem rivaled rain forest ecosystems in terms of their biodiversity. I was shocked. I had only heard about how humans were destroying the rain forest and that we needed to protect it at all costs. But here I lived in the middle of one of the most plant diverse places on earth in a rare ecosystem that was being destroyed all around me. In fact, my very home had been placed on a plot of land bulldozed from that chaparral. As a result, I began to have a greater appreciation of the natural system of which I was a part. I had already been fond of the desert and its beauty, but now I began to see the beauty of the Californian chaparral, the aroma of the black sage, the brilliant blue of the ceanothus, the stately character of the oak trees, and the deep red bark of the manzanitas. It was then that I planted my first garden consisting of only native plants. From that point on, I pledged to plant only California natives or food bearing plants. I have kept to my pledge.

I would encourage you my readers to investigate for yourselves the advantages of native landscaping which include beauty, diversity, low maintenance, and low water. The bees, butterflies, and birds will thank you. Take a short trip to Tree of Life Nursery off of Ortega highway. Take a tour of the California Botanic Garden in Claremont. You can continue the propagation of Ben's Garden. He planted the seeds of ideas and appreciation which have become for me a lifetime project that will continue long after I am gone.