



Leading the Way to Lifelong Learning

Conductor

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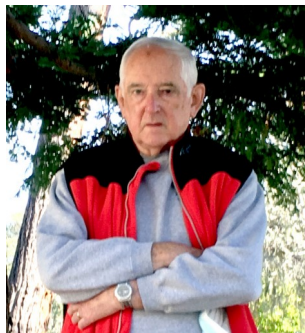
September/October 2025

The editors of *The Conductor* announce an upcoming change in the publication date of the newsletter beginning with the November/December issue. It will be published mid-month instead of the beginning of each the month. In preparation for this we are including information on our Wednesday Lecture scheduled for November 5, 2025.

The Gentrain Program classes for the fall session will be held on Tuesdays and Thursdays in Lecture Forum (LF) 102.

President's Corner

Peter Purdue
President



The end is near! August 31 signals the end of the current Board. The new Board will take office September 1. So, this is my final musing. Many thanks to all Board members for their many contributions over the last year. I think our biggest success was getting our budget under control. But, we were able to provide the new Board with enough

issues to keep the Board busy for the next year.

President's Corner

Nancy Johnson,
Incoming President

Thanks for all your work, Peter. As for me, I feel as if I'm beginning all over again. This is my second term as Gentrain Society President. The first was long ago - 2001 to 2002 - but my involvement stretches back much further. My experience with Gentrain began in the mid-1980s, after my husband, son, and I took our first trip to Europe. Being exposed to so much exciting history firsthand made me realize just how much I didn't know.



When I heard about the Gentrain Program, I thought it might be exactly what I needed to help me fill in the blanks. I tentatively registered for Unit 8 - just to try it out. Intrigued but not quite certain, I added Units 9, 10,

and 11 all at once. By the time I was ready to enroll in Unit 12, I was hooked - and the rest is "history."

Eventually, I began taking semester-length courses offered by Gentrain instructors, especially Grant Voth, who preceded Alan as Coordinator and literature instructor. It was Grant who encouraged me to pursue graduate school. After completing my M.A. in English Literature, I returned to teach Short Courses on Gentrain-related themes, lead a number of domestic and foreign travel-study tours, and serve as Coordinator of a Gentrain spin-off first envisioned by Tom Logan, called WorldTrain.

I'm proud to say the Johnsons are a Gentrain family. When our son Matt reached college age, he completed the Program. In recent years, my husband Bob has happily retired and is now enjoying Gentrain himself. I'm deeply grateful for all this wonderful program has offered us, and I look forward to a productive year serving you as your President once again.

Gentrain Society Board Meetings

The next Gentrain Society Board meetings will be held on campus on **September 17 and October 15, 2025** at 2:45 pm in MPC Social Sciences 104. **These Meetings are open to all Gentrain Society Members.**

Membership Report

Merry Nolte, Membership Chair

Welcome to these new Gentrainers: **Karen Sheffer and Maggie Steele.**

You should have received your invitation to renew your Gentrain membership by now, although notices were a little late this year. (Apologies due to vacation schedule and family surgery). **As usual, new parking stickers were included with the mailing.** Please renew promptly to save me first class postage on second reminders!

Results of August 6 Board Elections

Congratulations to our newly elected Gentrain Society Board for 2025-26. The results are:

President: Nancy Johnson

Vice-President: Becky Taylor

Secretary: Carol Harpster

Treasurer: Mary Alice Rennick

Members-At-Large are: Ruth Alota, Star Reiersen, Melissa Newlin

The Board will take office September. 1. Thank you to all who participated and who support the Gentrain Society!

Gentrain Registration Procedures

Mary Alice Rennick

Gentrain Society Treasurer and Webmsaster

Just a brief reminder that MPC has adopted an entirely new system for class registration. Their website still offers links to the old WebReg system, but they are not functional and will be removed soon. Do not try to use them.

By the time you read this, the Fall semester will be well underway. It is too late to register for the first Unit (first four weeks) of the Gentrain class. But there is still time to register for Units 2-4. To do so, you can follow the online instructions at Gentrain.org or <https://admissionshelp.mpc.edu/support/home>.

You may find it easier and more satisfying to simply visit the MPC Admissions and Records office (in Bldg. 22, near the softball field) during regular business hours.

Special Events

Michael Sovereign, Rene Kimzey, Co-chairs

The fall session of Gentrain classes started with a welcome Coffee Klatch. Students were greeted by Gentrain Society members who offered them coffee cake and coffee. The refreshments were provided by outgoing Society President Peter Purdue.

Gentrain Financial Report

Mary Alice Rennick, Gentrain Society Treasurer

During the past year your President and Treasurer have expressed concerns about the Society's long-term financial viability. Recently, there have been signs that corrective measures have stabilized our situation.

Our fiscal year ended on 30 June 2025. This is a good time to review our finances and consider our path forward. For the most part, our activities are self-supporting. For example, donations to the Scholarship Fund pay for our Scholarship Awards. Fees charged for Special Events and OSF cover the cost of tickets, transportation, etc..

The exception to this rule is our Operating Fund. It accumulates membership dues and general donations throughout the year. The money is used as needed to support day-to-day functions of the Society. Among these are Conductor publishing, Wednesday Lecture support (advertising, honoraria, snacks), website support, and other incidentals.

The final FY25 report generated by the MPC fiscal office confirms that, as expected, our self-supporting funds are all in approximate balance. The significant

finding is that our Operating Fund is also well-balanced. Operating income exceeded expenses by a few hundred dollars, about as close as we could hope to come to perfect balance.

We will continue to monitor our status. If you have any questions about our finances, please address them to the Treasurer at treasurer@gentrain.org or (831) 375-0702.

Scholarship Report

Vikki Logan, Scholarship Chair

We always refer to this time of the year as "Kickoff Season" for Scholarship contributions! Our coffers are empty after giving away the amazing amount of \$19,500!

In this issue of the Conductor I want to profile SUSAN MCBRIDE who is the winner of the Mary Ann Kane Memorial Scholarship. In re-reading her application I am again amazed by her: Susan's mother died when she was 8 years old, and she credits her father for teaching her to be responsible, treating people with kindness and respect, and helping other people when it is possible. After successfully raising a son with Asperger's syndrome as a single mother, at the age of 54, Susan decided to enroll at MPC, and she has this to say about our college: "The professors at MPC have helped me in so many ways. One is to believe in myself. Going to MPC was the best decision I have made."

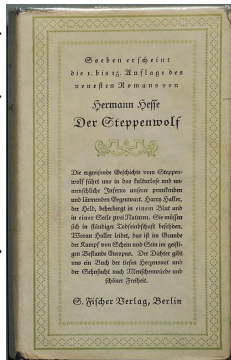
Susan intends to become a history teacher, and Taylor Finell has this to say about her, "Susan's enthusiasm for learning about history has convinced me that she will greatly contribute to any college environment. My experience conversing with her makes me confident that she has the qualities necessary to be an excellent student on and off campus. She is quick to ask questions about difficult concepts and can usually think critically as well as articulate herself in thoughtful writing. Along with her friendly and jovial personality, I can think of no recent student of mine more worthy of financial scholarship consideration."

MEET JOSUE ORTIZ, winner of the Jack and Isaline Sedan Memorial Scholarship: Josue will soon be leaving the peninsula to attend UC Irvine where he intends to obtain his BA in Chemistry. Josue has been an inspiration to other students during his time at MPC. This is what Josue's chemistry teacher has to say about him: "Josue was one of my favorite students from the Chem 1A class in the fall of 2022. Despite problems with anxiety and low self esteem, Josue has become a vital member of the STEM community. After participating in the 2023 UCSC ACCESS summer research Institute program, Josue became a student ambassador for the ACCESS program at MPC. Every time Josue benefits from an opportunity, he looks for a way to share that experience with his peers so that they might enjoy the same benefits. Josue has also helped create an annual summer research internship panel at

MPC. Josue's thoughtfulness and generosity towards his fellow students are just a few of the many attributes that make him worthy of scholarship assistance. Josue is very friendly and gets along with everyone. His goal is to obtain his BA in Chemistry and later to get his PHD in medical chemistry so that he can have the knowledge to develop new medications for mental disorders."

The Gentrain Book Club **Gerard Kapolka**

The Great Books discussion group is currently reading some of Shakespeare's tragedies. We will follow this with a discussion of *Steppenwolf* by Herman Hesse. Subsequent readings are yet to be determined. We welcome any new members, and you don't have to join the group at the beginning of the readings to participate. We meet on Zoom on Wednesday evenings at 7 pm. The discussions last about an hour. **If you wish to join our group, email me, Gerry Kapolka, at gtkapolka@gmail.com to receive a reading list and Zoom invitation.** We welcome all newcomers.



Older Adult Noncredit Courses

Through the Older Adult program, MPC offers free, noncredit classes for students at a variety of locations throughout the Monterey Peninsula, supported in part through taxpayer dollars. Older Adult courses have no minimum age requirement; however, curriculum is designed to meet the interests and lifestyle of older adults.

Students are admitted to the college and follow the registration and class schedules in the MPC academic calendar. Registration can be processed online or by phone with a credit card. To register, refer to the published Schedule of Classes or call 831-646-4002.

Wednesday Lectures

Gentrain Wednesday Lectures are held in LF 102 from 1:30 to 2:30 pm. Visitors are welcome; no charge or registration is required.

Wednesday, September 3, 1:30 pm **Persistence and Change in California's Kelp Forests**

Just over a decade ago, California's iconic kelp forests experienced the largest marine heat wave on record and an outbreak of kelp-eating sea urchins. The loss of some forests and persistence of others in Monterey Bay revealed new insight into the ecological role of sea otters and sea urchins, and the importance of marine ecosystem conservation for resilience.

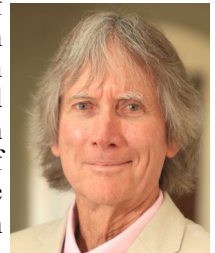
Joshua Smith, Ph.D., is a faculty member at UC Santa Cruz. His research group studies how species interactions and environmental change organize the structure, functioning and stability of coastal ecosystems.



Wednesday, September 17, 1:30 pm **Tides and Tidal Bores**

Mike Clancy will discuss how tides and tidal bores have affected humankind throughout history, including their impact on warfare from ancient times up to the present, and then provide an overview of the science behind these phenomena. This will include a discussion of how tides are predicted and what determines their nature, and an examination of what governs the presence or absence of tidal bores. The lecture will end with some exciting video footage of surfers riding the very impressive "Silver Dragon" tidal bore on the Qiantang River in China.

Mike Clancy earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Oceanography from Florida Institute of Technology in 1973, graduating first in his class, and a Master of Science Degree in Meteorology from the University of Miami in 1975. He worked for Science Applications International Corporation in the late '70s and the Naval Research Lab in the early '80s. He joined the U.S. Navy's Fleet Numerical Meteorology and Oceanography Center (FNMOC) in Monterey in 1983 and was selected as Technical and Scientific Director of FNMOC, the top civilian position in the organization, in 2005.



Over the course of his career, Mr. Clancy authored over 100 publications in meteorology, oceanography and information technology and received over 50 professional awards, including the Navy's highest civilian award. He retired from Federal Service in 2011 and was inducted into the FNMOC Hall of Fame in 2015.

Mr. Clancy is a founding member of the Monterey Bay Defense Alliance (MBDA) and has worked part time for the City of Monterey in support of MBDA. He has served as a reporter and columnist for local newspapers, Cedar Street Times and Pacific Grove Press, and co-hosted a political talk show on KSQD FM 90.7 radio. For the past several years Mr. Clancy has served on the Question Review Team for the Leon Panetta Lecture Series.

Mr. Clancy appears as a supporting actor in an award-winning independent feature film, *A Long Road to Tao*, which premiered at the Las Cruces International Film Festival in 2024. This film is streaming on several platforms, including Amazon Prime Video.

Mr. Clancy is a frequent lecturer on climate change and serves as Chair of the Monterey Chapter of the Citizens' Climate Lobby.

Wednesday, October 1, 1:30 pm Media Literacy in the Age of Disinformation

Media literacy - the application of critical thinking skills to differentiate between fact and propaganda - has become an essential practice in today's media environment. Now viewed by political operatives as a dangerous challenge to their representation of truth, the careful analysis of information appearing in all forms of media has never been more important to preserving democracy. Susan Meister, aware of the problems facing journalists today, formed the Media Literacy Coalition in order to inform people how false information can ensnare them, and why specific analytical skills to expose it are so important. She will discuss the importance of media literacy in today's information universe, while Dr. Daisy Martin, an expert on the skills necessary to distinguish information from disinformation in all forms of media, will discuss how to protect yourself from unconsciously aiding those who would use the media to deceive.



Susan Meister is the founder of the Monterey-based Media Literacy Coalition, which is comprised of national experts in government, library science, journalism, education, and public policy. Its mission is to advance critical thinking skills so that people of all ages can differentiate between fact and propaganda. The Coalition recently received an award for Public Service Journalism in the 2024 California Journalism awards.

Daisy Martin, Ph.D., is the founding director of the History & Civics Project, UC Santa Cruz, and a member of the UC Irvine and UC Santa Cruz Media Literacy Collaborative.



Wednesday, October 15, 1:30 pm So Many Books, So Little Time

Why not read the best books? Join Gerry Kapolka to learn more about Gentrain's Book Club. Gerry will talk about the groups' latest Zoom discussions on Shakespearean plays and the upcoming book *Steppenwolf*. Did you know the band that sang "Born to Be Wild" took its name from this novel? Gerry will talk a bit about the rationale for founding the Book Club group, describe its discussions and speak about some of the books they have examined. There will also be a brief Zoom tutorial, for those who want to learn how to use the program so they can join in.

Gerry Kapolka received his undergraduate degree from St. John's College with its Great Books Program. After studying for a year at the Jagiellonian University in Krakow, Poland, he went on to receive his Ph.D. in Slavic languages and literatures from The University of Chicago. He taught English, World Literature, and General Humanities at Rhode Island College, St. Mary's College in Michigan, MPC, Wagner College, and Rutgers University. For the past 23 years he has taught English at Santa Catalina School, serving eventually as Chair of the English department and Dean of Academics. He retired in June, 2018 and spent the winter semester as a senior lecturer at the Jagiellonian University in Krakow. He has published three book length translations of Polish literature and numerous articles, book reviews, and translations in a variety of academic journals and anthologies.



Wednesday, November 5, 1:30 pm Casanova: Man or Myth?



From seducer of nuns to notches on a bedpost, Casanova has the reputation as a ladies man. But that is far from the whole story. In actuality, he was an author, translator, mathematician, law secretary, financier, spy, diplomat, and theater impresario. Describing

carriage rides, hot chocolate, sharing beds at inns, carrying letters of introduction, playing faro, or buying ladies' gloves, he also wrote one of the most valuable descriptions of European travel and daily life in the eighteenth century. Join **Kathleen Gonzalez**, author of books about Casanova in Venice and in Rome and organizer of a symposium on him, to unravel the man from the myths about him.



Kathleen Gonzalez is an educator and author of three books plus essays and articles about travel, education and history.

MPC Fall Gentrain Program August 19, 21, 26, 28 and September 2, 4, 9, 11 GENTRAIN 8/408: LATE RENAISSANCE AND REFORMATION (1520-1600 AD)

The course examines the events and some of the consequences of the Protestant Reformation in Northern

Europe, while Southern Europe is in the last flowering of the Renaissance, in literature, art, philosophy and music. The works of Michelangelo, Cervantes, and Shakespeare are featured.



Cervantes

Michelangelo

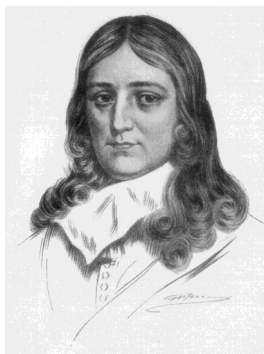
**September 16, 18, 23, 25, 30 and October 2, 7, 9
Gentrain 9/409: FOUNDATIONS OF THE
MODERN WORLD (1600-1690 AD)**

This period was one in which the foundation for the modern world was established. Although there were devastating religious wars and the creation of the absolute state by Louis XIV in France, the lasting impact of this period is evident in the emergence of democracy in England, the revolutionary philosophies of Descartes and Hobbes, the art of Rubens, Rembrandt, and Vermeer, and the poetry of the ultimate Protestant and democrat, John Milton.

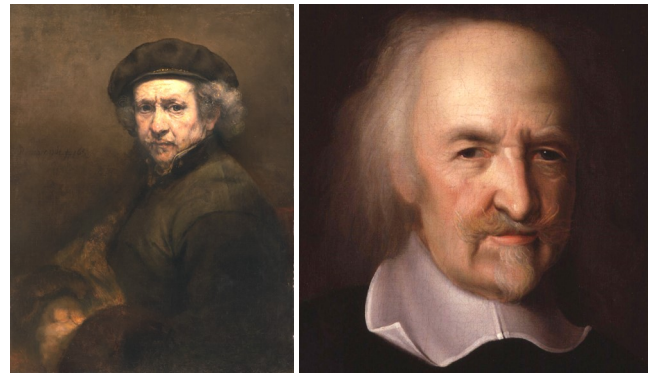


Rubens

Louis XIV



Milton



Rembrandt

Hobbes

**October 14, 16, 21, 23, 28, 30 and November 4, 6
Gentrain 10/410: AGE OF REASON (1690-1775
AD)**

The course deals with the age of rationalism in Western history, based on the philosophies of Leibniz, Locke, Hume, and Berkeley. It also examines the triumph of the bourgeoisie in English politics in the modifications of the social contract theory (which likewise becomes the basis for the American Declaration of Independence), the beginnings of the novel, the reaction to all of this in the great Evangelical Movements across Europe and America, and the foundations - in war and economics - for the French Revolution.

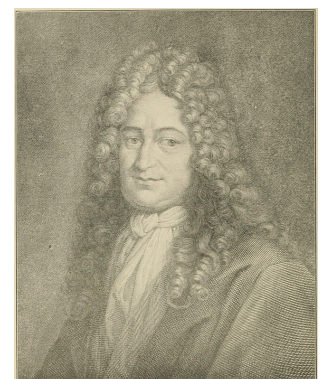


Locke

Berkeley



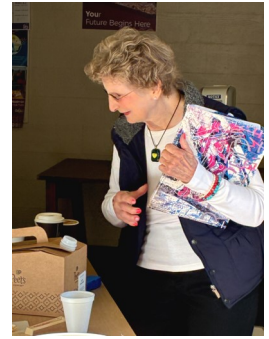
Hume



Leibniz

The above illustrations were taken from Wikipedia Commons.

Gentrain students enjoy a Coffee Klatch before the first day of class on August 20.



September 2025						
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
	1	2 unit8	3 lect1	4 unit8	5	6
7	8	9 unit8	10	11 unit8	12	13
14	15	16 unit9	17 lect2 meet	18 unit9	19	20
21	22	23 unit9	24	25 unit9	26	27
28	29	30				

October 2025						
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
			1 lect3	2 unit9	3	4
5	6	7 unit9	8	9 unit9	10	11
12	13	14 unit10	15 lect4 meet	16 unit10	17	18
19	20	21 unit10	22	23 unit10	24	25
26	27	28 unit10	29	30 unit10	31	

Key to Calendar

**lect1= LECTURE - PERSISTENCE
AND CHANGE IN CALIFORNIA'S
KELP FORESTS**

**lect2 = LECTURE - TIDES AND
TIDAL BORES**

**lect3 = LECTURE - MEDIA
LITERACY IN THE AGE OF
DISINFORMATION**

**lect4 = LECTURE - SO MANY
BOOKS, SO LITTLE TIME**

**meet = GENTRAIN SOCIETY
BOARD MEETING**

**unit8= GENT 8: THE EARLY
RENAISSANCE : Part 2 (1520-
1600)**

**unit9 = GENT 9: FOUNDATIONS
OF THE MODERN WORLD (1600-
1690 AD)**

**unit10 = GENT 10:AGE OF
REASON (1690-1775 AD)**

**Yes, I would like to contribute to the
Gentrain Society Scholarship Fund**

980 Fremont Street, Monterey CA 93940

(Please make your checks payable to MPC/Gentrain Society)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Amount enclosed: \$ _____

Invitation to Join

Dues: \$35 per year, \$50 Couples

Send your check payable to the *MPC/Gentrain
Society*

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

E-mail address: _____

Please clip out and send to:
Membership, *Gentrain Society* - MPC
980 Fremont St., Monterey CA 93940

**The Gentrain Society of MPC
2025 - 2026
Board of Directors**

President: Nancy Johnson (831) 373-7008
Vice President: Becky Taylor (831) 869-1562
Secretary: Carol Harpster (510) 410-0822
Treasurer: Mary Alice Rennick (831) 375-0702
Member-at-Large: Melissa Newlin (831) 869-0646
Member-at-Large: Star Reiersen (831) 372-5725
Member-at-Large: Ruth Alota (831) 392-5034
Imm. Past President: Peter Purdue (831) 646-9216
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Scholarship: Vikki Logan (831) 625-8653
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Michael Sovereign (831) 646-1912
Oregon Shakespeare Festival:
Allison Porter (831) 394-8051
Webmaster: Mary Alice Rennick (831) 375-0702

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GENTRAIN SOCIETY SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER

September 3 - 1:30 pm - PERSISTENCE AND CHANGE IN CALIFORNIA'S KELP FORESTS - Just over a decade ago, California's iconic kelp forests experienced the largest marine heat wave on record and an outbreak of kelp-eating sea urchins. The loss of some forests and persistence of others in Monterey Bay revealed new insight into the ecological role of sea otters and sea urchins, and the importance of marine ecosystem conservation for resilience. Joshua Smith, Ph.D., is a faculty member at UC Santa Cruz.

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