



Leading the Way to Lifelong Learning

Conductor

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September 16 - November 15, 2026

President's Corner

Nancy Johnson, President



As I write this in late August, a new year is beginning for both the Gentrain Society and the Gentrain Program. I'm happy to report that the Society remains financially stable, membership has grown slightly since last year, our Wednesday lectures are set for the fall, and we have scheduled a bus trip to San Francisco to see

Treasures of the Pharaohs at the De Young.

The response to the museum trip was unanticipated. The first bus filled almost immediately, prompting the Board to reserve a larger bus to accommodate the waiting list. I'm pleased to say that it, too, is now full. Please extend special thanks to Rene, Mike, and Becky for their work in making this happen. **As a bonus, our resident Egyptologist, Tom Logan, will give a lecture about the exhibit on October 14, and it will be open to all.** We hope to do occasional extra lectures in the future when a timely topic presents itself and a speaker is available. **Tom's lecture will be at 1:30 pm in LF-103.**

Our annual trip to the Oregon Shakespeare Festival took place this summer, and Allison has already placed a deposit for next year's offering. After several years of shepherding this popular event, she has let us know she would like to pass the torch. If you would enjoy taking it on, we are looking for a volunteer to keep the tradition going. Allison promises to thoroughly train her successor. If you would like to know more about this position, you'll find her phone number on the back page of this issue.

Turning to the Gentrain Program, I have good news. As you know, we have a new Coordinator, Dr. Heather Crowley, and a new literature instructor, Joshua Converse. Tom Logan, ever the scholar, has updated his lectures over the summer, and Stephanie Spoto and Gamble Madsen continue to refine theirs.

After a gap of several years, I decided to register for the course again this fall. I am thoroughly enjoying it. It's true, everything old can be new again! It's too late to join Unit 1, but Unit 2 begins on September 15 and Unit 3 on October 13. I encourage you to stop by and recharge your intellectual batteries in the course that has enriched the Monterey Peninsula for decades.

Welcome!

Dr. Heather Crowley, Gentrain Program Coordinator

Welcome to a new academic year Gentrainers! The faculty are delighted to be starting our lecture cycle and sharing our historical, art historical, philosophical, and literature expertise with you this semester. This fall, we will be exploring the beginnings of human history through to the end of the Roman Republic, with emphasis along the way on the Bronze and Iron Age cultures of the Mediterranean and Europe, and the Classical world of ancient Greece.



With the well-deserved retirement of Dr. Alan Haffa this past spring, there have been a few changes to the Gentrain academic line-up. Tom Logan will continue to share the history of premodern cultures with our group, as will Dr. Gamble Madsen, who will tackle the visual culture of the region, and Dr. Stephanie Spoto, who will explore the philosophical ideas of the period. Filling Alan's shoes in the literature component of the program will be Joshua Converse, who comes to Gentrain from the English Department and a course of study that includes his own time as a MPC student, while the day-to-day directorship of academics will be managed by myself from the History Department. Whether returning or new, our faculty is excited for the commencement of lectures and the conversations we will have with all of you in the classroom.

In the coming months, we are planning on running registration sessions for Gentrain members with staff from MPC admissions. The dates of these sessions are TBD, but are expected to align with the Wednesday Lecture series. If you are experiencing registration issues, these sessions will offer a chance to get help - please watch for upcoming dates.

Wishing all Gentrain members a very happy start to the new semester.

Gentrain Society Board Meetings

The next Gentrain Society Board meetings will be held on campus on **September 16 and October 21** at 2:45

pm in MPC Social Sciences 104. **Meetings are open to all Gentrain Society Members.**

Membership Report

Merry Nolte, Membership Chair

A hearty Gentrain welcome to these new members: Cathryn Chinn, Randall Clark, Mary Frazier, Shirley Marien, Pat Creese & Vaughn McIlrath, and Judy Player.

Thank you to those who have already renewed their membership in the Gentrain Society. If you have not yet renewed, please send your renewal in now and save me postage for final reminders!

Introducing Joshua Converse

Gentrain Society Election Results

Peter Purdue, Chair Nominating Committee

In August of each year we elect new Board Members for the following year. The election was held at the first "Wednesday" lecture in August.

The results for this year are as follows:

President:	Nancy Johnson
Vice President:	Becky Taylor
Secretary:	Carol Harpster
Treasurer:	Mary Alice Rennick
At large:	Star Reiersen
	Ruth Alota
	Rebecca Bishop

New Board Member's terms begin September 2026.

Special Events

Mike Sovereign and Rene Kimzey, Co-chairs

"The Wheels on the Bus go round and round" on October 16th for our visit to the De Young Museum. We have sold all the seats but are taking names for a waiting list - be sure to include your phone number. Tom Logan will be giving a pre-trip lecture on October 14 at 1:30 pm in LF 103. Hope you are joining us for the Treasures of the Pharaohs adventure.

Scholarship Report

Vikki Logan, Scholarship Chair

Meet Nicolas Arnold, winner of the Chuck Kimzey memorial scholarship:

Nicolas returned to school at the age of 32 to pursue a degree as an X-ray technologist. He stated, "Returning to college at age 32, I am determined to not only survive, but improve and grow. I have sought therapy which has helped me to understand my experiences, build healthy boundaries and discover what my strengths are. I feel for the first time in my life that I am taking control where it always felt like others were controlling it for me. One of the most important things that I have learned is that I have the ability to be calm

and steady in overwhelming situations. When others are stressed, I focus on what needs to be done and come up with solutions quickly. I have learned to embrace this as one of my greatest assets. My goal is to become an X-ray technologist. I really enjoy helping other people, especially in times of stress and pain."

One of Nicholas' professors has this to say about him: "Nick is what I call an "altruistic tutor." He regularly stayed in lab until his classmates finished, even if he had already turned in the assignment. Other students see him as a natural leader. I strongly endorse Nick for any scholarships for which he is eligible."

Recent Memorial donations: June Armstrong, in beloved memory of John Armstrong. John is a prior President of the Gentrain Society and was a math instructor at MPC for many years.

In 2027 a memorial scholarship will be given John's name.

Webmaster Report

Mary Alice Rennick, Webmaster

Thank you to everyone who participated in the recent survey about the Gentrain website. We collected 27 responses during the 3-day survey period. The website team is still analyzing the results, but a few highlights stand out:

The most highly valued features of the site are details of upcoming Wednesday Lectures and lecture notes for the current unit of the Gentrain class.

Not far behind are the quick links to our next activities and details of upcoming Special Events.

We will review the entire collection to learn what works for our users and plan future developments to focus on their preferences. The goal is to present an attractive site that provides easy access to the most valuable information.

As always, specific comments or suggestions are welcome via email to webmaster@gentrain.org

The Gentrain Book Club

Gerard Kapolka

The Great Books discussion group is currently reading Plato's *Symposium* to be followed by *Artistotle's Nichomachean Ethics*. After these works, we will read Shakespeare's history plays. We welcome any new members, and you don't have to join the group at the beginning of the reading 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 gkapolka@gmail.com to receive a reading list and Zoom invitations. We welcome all newcomers.

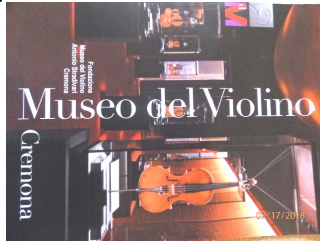
Wednesday Lectures

Gentrain Wednesday Lectures are held in LF 103 from 1:30 to 2:30 pm. Visitors are welcome; no charge or registration is required.

September 16, 2026, 1:30 pm

The Violin Museum in Cremona, Italia

One of the highlights of traveling in Italia is returning to Cremona to tour the Violin Museum, recognized around the world as one of the most valuable collections of violins created by the early masters of the craft, Antonio Stradivarius, and the Amati and Guarneri families.



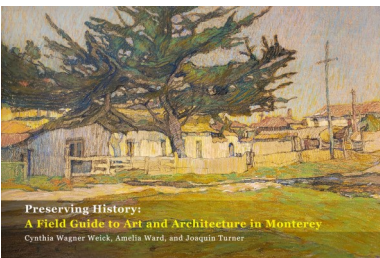
The Violin Museum has impressive displays and exhibits of the craft of violin making - selecting the right woods, carving with precision tools to make the bridge, neck, scroll, finger board, belly chin rest and ribs. There are more than thirty separate wooden parts of a violin. And then the strings.

Jack Erickson writes international thrillers, mysteries, true crime, and romantic suspense novels. He is currently writing the Milan Thriller Series featuring the anti-terrorism police, DIGOS, at Milan's Questura (police headquarters). Erickson travels throughout Italia for research and sampling Italian contemporary life and culture.



October 7, 2026, 1:30 pm

Art, Architecture and Cultural Evolution in Historic Monterey



Preserving History: A Field Guide to Art and Architecture in Monterey. This talk joins these two traditions and traces the area's multi-cultural evolution - from the coastal Native

Americans through the Spanish, Mexican and American eras. Highlights include Rumsen tule dwellings, Spanish Colonial religious structures, Mexican adobe and stone residences, as well as Monterey Colonial and

other American-influenced buildings. Attendees will gain a deeper appreciation for the many historic sites that grace the streets of Monterey today and for the artists whose work celebrates these architectural treasures.

Dr. Cynthia Wagner Weick has pursued her lifelong interests in art and art history since retiring in Carmel-by-the-Sea in 2017. She taught in the business and engineering schools at University of the Pacific for 27 years.



October 21, 2026, 1:30 pm

Old Age is Not for Sissies



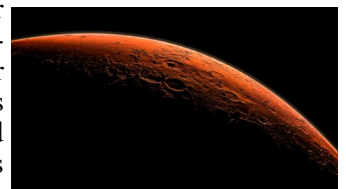
This is a staged reading about old age. It features poetry, elegies and short monologues of famous and not so famous people telling just what it is like to be old. Selections are from Lewis Carroll, William Shakespeare, Dorothy Parker, Robinson Jeffers and even Bette Davis. Sometimes old age is happy and lyrical, sometimes not. But this show, read by three versatile actors and narrated by playwright Carol Marquart, will seem like fun!

Carol Marquart, playwright, has written and produced staged readings of famous and infamous persons of the twentieth century. These readings have taken place all over the Monterey Peninsula. The subject of her plays have included Carol Steinbeck, Mark Twain, Frank Lloyd Wright, Julia Child, Bette Davis, William Randolph Hearst and even Rasputin!

November 4, 2026, 1:30 pm

Discovering Mars

Along with the four other naked-eye-visible planets - Mercury, Venus, Jupiter and Saturn - Mars has been the source of fear and fascination for thousands of years. Due to its reddish appearance - the color of war and aggression - Mars was portrayed as the "warrior planet" by Roman and Greek astrologers. Recent exploration of the red planet by telescopes, orbiters, landers and rovers has revealed a fascinating history of a rich atmosphere, warm lakes, rivers and oceans, and possibly primitive life. Barriers to human colonization of Mars are many and formidable, but only time and technology will tell if, and when, we will be able to make Mars a second home for humanity.



Milos Radakovich came to the U.S. from Yugoslavia at the age of 10. A graduate of San Francisco State, he

moved to the local area in 1971 to further his studies in marine science at Moss Landing Marine Labs and the Biological Sonar Lab at SRI. He's been a science educator for more than 50 years, and also serves as an on-board naturalist for Celebrity Cruises.



MPC Fall Gentrain Program

September 15, 17, 22, 24, 29 and October 1, 6, 8

GENTRAIN 2/402: FOUNDATIONS OF THE CLASSICAL WORLD - 1200-500 B.C.

Examine Minoan, Mycenaean, Neo-Babylonian, Hittite, and ancient Israelite societies through their history, visual culture, religious traditions, and literature.



October 13, 15, 20, 22, 27, 29 and November 3, 5 **GENTRAIN 3/403: THE GOLDEN AGE OF GREECE - 500-300 BCE**

Explore the flourishing of ancient Greek culture during its "Golden Age." Discuss challenges to Greek society both foreign and domestic, the rise of democracy, the beginnings of philosophy, and the cultural legacies of Greek theater and art.



November 10, 12, 17, 19 and December 1, 3, 8, 10 **GENTRAIN 404A: THE ROMAN REPUBLIC AND RISE OF EMPIRE - 500 BCE-14 CE**

Dive into the origins of the Roman Republic through to its transition into an empire. Investigate institutions, analyze art, ponder philosophy, and learn about literature from across the ancient Roman Mediterranean.



Oregon Shakespeare Festival 2026



photo by Rebecca Bishop



photo by Rebecca Bishop



set of
A
Midsummer
Night's
Dream

photo
by
Allison
Porter



photo by Rebecca Bishop



photo by Rebecca Bishop

Oregon Shakespeare Festival 2026

photos by Rebecca Bishop



Reviews

TO BEGIN, I'D LIKE TO SAY, "IT WAS AN ADVENTURE AND I CAN'T WAIT UNTIL NEXT YEAR!"

Wendy Markel

From the time we left Monterey until we pulled into the parking lot upon return, it was an adventure! You never knew what was going to happen next - even though you had packed your bags, were on the bus along with Professor Haffa and thirty or so other keen participants and had (or not) been to all the pre-trip lectures. As Mount Shasta slid past to the east our bus heading north. An unplanned stop was accomplished at a Starbucks, and comradery began forming. We landed at the local university dorms to find wonderful accommodations and welcoming staff at the Cox Hall of Southern Oregon University.

Day one was magical - full of time to explore opportunities and time for nap before our first play - Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew* performance in the Elizabethan outdoor theatre that the following morning we all had something to say about.

Day two: Prof Haffa lead us in a discussion of "*Taming*." It was hilarious! We all had something to say, but Prof led and many observations, opinions and theatrical aspects were shared (It could have been a play in itself with a producer!). That same day we found ourselves in the indoor Agnus Bowmer Theatre to see *Come From Away*, a new play none of us had seen, based on the fact that by the end of the performance (without intermission) we were speechless and full of emotion. We had to recover to attend the outdoor Shakespearean theatre's production of Jane Austen's *Emma*. So, so different from our afternoon experience, but we were ready and the outdoor, evening performance which was spell-binding, and the theatrical performance was 'full-on' theatre.

Day three: We couldn't wait to gather with everyone and be led by Prof Haffa in discussion. Observations, opinions, previous experiences, questions/answers and historical knowledge were all guided and shared. The previous day's theatre was enriched by shared conversations and knowledge. Again in the afternoon the performance of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was in the Bowmer theatre. We had the most amazing seats in the middle section half way up the seating area, and the performance was brilliant as only a crazy, Shakespearean plot full of design, fairies, human silliness and great theatrical stage can be. It was a hard act to follow but the evening performance at the outdoor Elizabethan Theatre of *Henry VI Part I* left us enthralled with "no holds barred" performance of Henry's friend Falstaff and dramatic scenes of sword battles to the death.

Day four: Our morning discussions rose to a fever pitch as we compared "*Dream*" and "*Henry*." The stage sets, the costuming, the reality, the history, the sword fighting vs the donkey and sleeping drops in the ears were discussed plus Falstaff and history. We were becoming theatre aficionados. On several days time permitted us to get together for lunch or dinner and Ashland was full of fun restaurants that were easily accessible and not too far from the theatres we attended. Many shops were also clustered around the theatres. The party had to end so the performance of *Raisin in The Sun* at the indoor Angus Bowmer Theatre was perfect. This was "theatre" as we knew it. A fully set stage that was complete with chairs, windows, door and a "set." We sat back and ate it all up as the actors gave us an amazing theatrical performance of a dramatic (racial) 'situation' we could all remember.

Our return journey was smooth and un-eventful. Our theatre experience was over, but the California scenery along the way was lovely with Shasta Lake going by, the quick visit to Turtle Bay's Sundial Bridge, the unusual ribs of the Sutter Buttes, before a lunch stop at Williams on the way home.

I'd do it all again in a heartbeat.

My Impressions Of Gentrain Ashland, Oregon Trip

Rebecca Bishop

I loved attending the Shakespeare Festival trip with Gentrain! There were three classes before the trip during which Dr. Alan Haffa gave an overview of each of the plays, so I felt armed with knowledge when we arrived at the theater. These meetings also provided the participants an opportunity to meet each other before the trip. We stayed at Southern Oregon University and the room was perfect: spacious, clean, with a great shower and powerful air conditioning. The university is a comfortable thirty-minute walk to downtown along a tree-lined street. But, if you don't want to walk, the chartered bus goes back and forth throughout the day and is easy to catch. Downtown you'll find Lithia Park, which is a great place to spend time surrounded by nature. There are also many nice shops and restaurants. My favorite places to eat were Morning Glory (to avoid waiting, try to arrive before opening), Sushi Heaven, Thai Pepper, and Tlalli (you will need reservations). Back at the university, the discussions about the plays were an education in itself! Everyone had valuable insights, and we learned from each other. Dr. Haffa is a deft hand at balancing participation, and the discussions were highly enjoyable. I can't wait to go again next year!

**The Gentrain Society of MPC
2026 - 2027
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980 Fremont St., Monterey CA 93940

