



Leading the Way to Lifelong Learning

# Conductor

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March 16 - May 15, 2026

## President's Corner

*Nancy Johnson,  
President*



This issue's report will be brief, other than to announce that all is well in the governance of the Gentrain Society. We are fortunate to have an experienced Board that needs no direction to ensure that the Society runs well, and their dedication makes my job much easier. Please take a moment to take a look at the Directory on the back page of this issue, and if

you see one of these committed individuals, join me in thanking them for all they do.

As you read on, you'll find information about upcoming speakers, our annual visit to the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, and an enjoyable afternoon event at Casa Serrano. We hope to see you at as many of these activities as you can attend.

## Gentrain Society Board Meetings

The next Gentrain Society Board meetings will be held on campus on **March 18 and April 15** 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 our new Gentrain member Jacqueline T. Fobes.

## Ashland Report

*Allison Porter, Committee Chair*

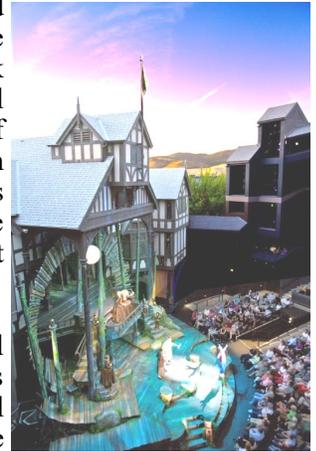
Join the Gentrain Society and Dr. Alan Haffa, Director of Gentrain, as we visit Ashland, Oregon, for the annual Shakespeare Festival, July 6 - July 11, 2026.

We are scheduled to see six plays: *Taming of the Shrew* (one can only wonder that the OSF will do with this troublesome play, but the brochure promises a "bold production"), *Come From Away* (a Tony Award play based on the true story of Canadians taking in a stranded plane load after 9/11), *Emma* (a "bold, gender-bending romp that turns Jane Austin on her head"), *A Midsummer's Night's Dream* (Shakespeare's timeless romantic comedy, where "the course of true love never did run smooth"), *Henry IV, Part One* (will Prince Hal

ever grow up to take over the crown?), and *Raisin in the Sun* (Lorraine Hansberry's seminal mid-Century work that "changed the American theater forever").

A four-session overview and analysis of the plays will be led by Dr. Haffa in the week or so before the trip. We will also have daily discussions of the plays after viewing them in Ashland. These sessions are required in order that we may qualify for student housing and ticket prices.

We are housed at the local university dormitories. Rooms are comparable to motel rooms; most have two double beds, private bathrooms, mini fridge, and microwave. Suites can be reserved for one or two people.



**Costs include:** Transportation from and back to MPC and shuttle service in Ashland, five nights lodging, tickets to six plays, and all gratuities. Meals are not included.

**Costs for this year's trip are as follows:**

Suite/single	\$1,821
Suite/double EACH	\$1,695

The trip is limited to 30 participants and spaces are filled on a first-come basis. **Your check for the full amount, made out to MPC/Gentrain Society, will secure your reservation. Please send to Allison Porter, 1920 Noche Buena Street, Seaside CA 93955.** Make sure your name, address, phone number and email address are included (typed or printed). If you are not a member of the Gentrain Society, please enclose an additional check for \$35, made out to Gentrain.

Any questions about registration can be answered by Allison at 831-224-8052.

## Special Events

*Michael Sovereign, Rene Kimzey, Co-chairs*

Hope everyone is able to join us March 27th, 2-4 pm, at the **historic Casa Serrano for a tour, talk on the Ladies of Larkin House and, of course, refreshments.** RSVP at [admin@gentrain.org](mailto:admin@gentrain.org)

**We are trying to arrange a showing of ALL THE PRESIDENT'S MEN** for those who did not get to see it when Lighthouse failed to find the movie as arranged. It will be in the event room of the Monterey Public Library. **FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC** with popcorn for all. Stay tuned....

## **Gentrain Financial Report**

*Mary Alice Rennick, Treasurer*

According to the accounting data provided by the MPC Fiscal office, Gentrain finished the first half of our 2026 fiscal year in stable financial condition. While many of our activities are designed to be self-funding (they generate enough income to offset their expenses), operational activities (Wednesday Lectures, The Conductor, Advertising, etc.) are supported by operational income (dues and unrestricted donations). Therefore, critical elements of our budget involve the balance between operational income and expense. As of 31 December 2025, the net change in our operational account (income - expense) was over \$6,000). Conservative projections through June 2026 indicate a surplus of about \$3,000 for the entire fiscal year. This is a comfortable result, especially because we have accumulated a healthy emergency reserve fund.

The Gentrain Board approved a revised budget for FY26 at their February meeting. It is based on our actual income and expenses during the first half of the year and expectations for further activity from January through June 2026.

If you have any concerns about Gentrain Society finances or would like to know more details, please contact any Board member or send mail to [treasurer@gentrain.org](mailto:treasurer@gentrain.org).

## **Scholarship Report**

*Vikki Logan, Scholarship Chair*

**Meet Ryan Beck, winner of the Lynn Swerrie Memorial Scholarship:** Ryan is best described by Kevin Raskoff, Ph.D Biology Department, MPC: "Ryan's journey to this point has been anything but conventional. After high school he spent the next decade serving his community as an EMT, volunteer firefighter and ultimately a police officer. He worked in law enforcement for the East Bay Regional Park District and then the City of Pacific Grove. Unfortunately in 2023 Ryan was seriously injured on duty. After months of treatment and therapy, it became clear that his injury would require him to medically retire. Ryan enrolled in my Marine Biology class in 2024. He quickly demonstrated a strong aptitude for the subject earning the highest grade in the class. Ryan's future goals include earning a degree in Marine Biology or a related field with the intention of transferring to a CSU or UC In the coming year. I wholeheartedly recommend Ryan for the MPC scholarships."

**We received our annual donation in the amount of \$2000 in memory of Isaline and Jack Sedan, given by their daughter Janet Sedan Hoehn**

"Dear Gentrain Society members,  
It seems especially fitting this year to focus on the positives, such as activities and programs designed to enhance our communities. The Gentrain Society Scholarship Program certainly deserves that designation. Providing financial support to students who have not had the same opportunities and privileges that many of us enjoy is such a worthy effort and a huge benefit not only to the students and their families but also to society as a whole. I applaud the Gentrain Society scholarship program for their work raising funds for MPC students. I feel so honored to be able to play a part in this effort. I send my warmest greetings to you and all the others whose work makes these scholarships possible.  
Most sincerely,  
Janet"

### **Recent memorial donations:**

**Grant and Norma Voth in memory of Bob Zobel  
Tom and Vikki Logan in memory of Posh Emery**

## **Webmaster Report**

*Mary Alice Rennick*

**Our website has undergone a few changes in 2026.**

Most of them have been technical, improving the security, efficiency, and performance of the site. A few may be more apparent to our users.

- The process for submitting membership applications was broken. We upgraded our software to restore it.
- The form software upgrade included improved anti-spam protection. This greatly simplified the monitoring of our mail. You should see more timely response to mail sent to any [gentrain.org](mailto:gentrain.org) address.

**We have a wish list for new features, but these would all incur significant design and implementation costs.**

- Ability to process on-line payments. This would be convenient, but it may not be possible. So far, we have been unable to identify procedures acceptable to MPC.
- Search capabilities for library holdings and faculty notes.

**If you have any other suggestions** regarding features to add, remove, or modify, please contact any Board Member or [webmaster@gentrain.org](mailto:webmaster@gentrain.org).

## **The Gentrain Book Club**

*Gerard Kapolka*

The Great Books discussion group is currently discussing some of Shakespeare's Sonnets. On April 16 we will begin a discussion of *Anna Karenina* by Leo Tolstoy. 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 [gkapolka@gmail.com](mailto: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.*

#### Wednesday, March 18, 2026 - 1:30 pm The Packing of the Treasures of King Tut

**Tom Logan** has been an integral part of the MPC Gentrain Program since 1991. In 1976 (50 years ago) he traveled from the Metropolitan Museum of Art to Cairo Egypt. At that time he was an Associate Curator at the Met assigned to oversee the packing of 55 priceless treasures from Tut's tomb. The purpose of the exhibition was to improve relations between Egypt and the U.S.A. But it was trying times in the Middle East. In addition to the unrest, a plane headed to Israel was hijacked to Entebbe in Uganda. This lecture will review some of the art objects and the adventures both chaotic and funny.

### March 23-28 Spring Break

#### Wednesday, April 1, 2026 - 1:30 pm Immigration: Legal and Illegal

The controversies over both legal and illegal immigration over the last 10 years make it a ripe topic for discussion. In this talk, **Dr. David Henderson** will explore the various arguments for and against both kinds of immigration and will evaluate the effects of past immigration. He will also evaluate the main arguments against it and will consider "keyhole" solutions that address the potential problems while providing gains to both Americans and immigrants.

David R. Henderson, Ph.D., is Professor of Economics Emeritus at the Naval Postgraduate School and a research fellow with the Hoover Institution at Stanford University. He was previously a senior economist with President Reagan's Council of Economic Advisers.

#### Wednesday, April 15, 2026 - 1:30 pm The Wisdom of the Greeks

**Dr. Alan Haffa** will be speaking on Greek Wisdom and Literature. In this talk he will explore some of his favorite quotes from Ancient Greek literature and discuss them in terms of what they tell us about the values of Ancient Greek society. Where possible he will try to draw lessons for us in the present.

Dr. Haffa is the Director of the Gentrain Program and teaches literature at Monterey Peninsula College. His

Ph.D. dissertation from the University of Wisconsin-Madison was on the topic of supplication in epic in Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, Vergil's *Aeneid*, Dante's *Divine Comedy* and Tasso's *Jerusalem Delivered*.

#### Wednesday, May 6, 1026 - 1:30 pm Fog and Climate Change

Along the California coast, fog forms when warm, moist air from the ocean moves over the cold sea surface close to shore. **Dr. Daniel M. Fernandez**, CSUMB professor of applied environmental science, is one of the "Fog Five," as they call themselves, a group of interdisciplinary researchers who have been awarded a grant to establish the Pacific Coast Fog Research Project. They study how fog patterns shape life along the Pacific coast and how those patterns are impacted by climate change. Their work will also help identify how we can best harness our beloved fog as a natural resource, plus its importance to coastal ecosystems.

Daniel M. Fernandez, Ph.D. earned a doctorate in electrical engineering from Stanford University. He has been on the faculty at CSUMB since 1996. He teaches courses in physics, sustainability, systems thinking, infrastructure and Environmental Studies.

### MPC Spring Gentrain Program

February 24, 26 - March 3, 5, 10, 12, 17, 19

#### Gentrain 13/413 THE END OF INNOCENCE (1870-1918 AD)

The course gives a portrait of Europe leading up to and including World War I. It is also the age of "isms": impressionism, realism, naturalism, cubism, futurism, Marxism, and Freudianism. It culminates with World War I and the Russian Revolution.

March 31 - April 2, 7, 9, 14, 16, 21, 23

#### Gentrain 14/414: BETWEEN THE WARS (1918 - 1945)

The course is a look at the period between, leading up to, and including World War II. It examines such topics as Communism and Stalinism and the rise of Fascism, the impact of the Great Depression, and cultural responses to the challenges of the period, including radical new kinds of art, literature and philosophy.

April 28, 30 - May 5, 7, 12, 14, 19, 21

#### Gentrain 15/415 WORLD WAR II TO THE PRESENT (1945-PRESENT)

The course examines selected aspects of the Western World in the past half century, including such topics as the Cold War and the succession of wars that followed World War II, and the rapid development of movements in art, literature, and philosophy in response to a changing world.

**The Gentrain Society of MPC**

**2025 - 2026**

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 Michael Sovereign (831) 646-1912

Oregon Shakespeare Festival:  
 Allison Porter (831) 394-8051

Webmaster: Mary Alice Rennick (831) 375-0702

The Gentrain Society of Monterey  
 Peninsula College  
 980 Fremont St Monterey, CA 93940  
 Phone: 646-4224 gentrain.org

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Paul Blum, Co-Editor  
 Terry Blum, Co-Editor  
 Phone: 372-0895  
 Email: tblumgm@gmail.com

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**Yes, I would like to contribute to the**

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*(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:** \_\_\_\_\_

**\_\_\_ I would like to learn about volunteer opportunities.**

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

