



# OMNIILORE NEWS

Volume 8 Issue 4

July 1999

## OMNIILORE NEWS

A publication of OMNIILORE, a Learning in Retirement Organization affiliated with The Division of Extended Education of California State University Dominguez Hills

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OmniiLore News is published six times annually. We welcome short feature articles and news stories. Contact any of the staff members with your contributions.

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## Record Number Enjoy Luncheon Forum

Over 80 Omnilorians, friends and potential members enjoyed an interesting and stimulating speaker (see below), had a great lunch and had a chance to socialize with many Omnilorians that we hadn't seen for a while. This happened on June 22nd at the South Bay Grill in Torrance. As president Burt Cutler said, "Where else can you get all this for only \$10 — and surrounded by intelligent and wonderful companions too?"

### JUNE FORUM SPEAKER CHRIS GANTNER "WHO OWNS HISTORY"

by Ellen Bradford

"Facts are dead until we breathe life into them," claimed Chris Gantner, teaching fellow of history at UCLA and speaker at the June Omnilore Forum. The title of his talk was "Who Owns History". He demonstrated that history is far from being a neutral subject; instead, each history book is the reflection of the period in which it is written.

Gantner used the analogy that anyone keeping a history of his own life keeps track of the unusual incidents, the atypical occurrences, and leaves out the unseemly aspects. So it is with a review of past events. Thoughts and feelings cannot easily be included, and self-flattery can shade the narrative. Cultural wars and new data can change what one knew or believed.

He also used the examples of the Washington Monument and the Viet Nam War Memorial as examples of how history is viewed. The one, so cold and austere versus the other -- an emotionally involving tribute to those who were killed. So too, the early history books contained only records of white men with no mention of women, people of color, immigrants and economic situations.

Now historiography has changed and today's history books reflect today's society. History is not boring, but is compelling and political. It is how we identify ourselves and is always *contingent*, not just bare facts. A lively and responsive question and answer period followed.

### .....and Bouquets To

A special thank you to the Forum Committee who continue to outdo themselves. To Emil Raulin and Patricia Morris, cochairs, who put in countless hours. To Lindie Banks, Vice-President of Academics who recommended the wonderful speaker. To Edith Van Bellehem for collecting the money, keeping track of reservations and providing us with our name tags. To Ronnie Saunders for the publicity and to everyone else who made this event happen.



### DON'T MISS — IN THIS ISSUE

- ⇒ President's Message Page 2
- ⇒ Brainstorming Session Set Page 2
- ⇒ UCLA Museum Tour Planned Page 3



**MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT**

by Burt Cutler

- Our Membership Committee has a multi-pronged recruitment effort underway including contacting retirees

from industry and education, a magazine, newspaper, and T.V. campaign plus direct mail. Special thanks to Committee Chair Merle Culbert, and committee members Michael Grinde, Marie Huntley, Mary Pinoniemi, Bob Saunders, and notably Edith Garvey, who continues to do a yeoman job every year as New Member Liaison. We all join in an enthusiastic welcome to the approximately 20 new members that have joined us this year.

- Every year ALIROW (western association of LIR groups) holds a separate yearly conference for the northern and southern organizations. And every other year ALIROW invites all the organizations to meet together. Last month Diana and I attended that biennial conference in Sacramento. Due partially to the location (too far away for some of the southern members) and the almost identical timing of the EIN (Elderhostel Institute Network - the national umbrella for LIR groups) 10th year celebration in Washington D.C., less than half of the ALIROW organizations attended.

There is some value in comparing notes with other LIRs. Every organization has their own modus operandi, which generally, but not always, is deemed optimum by them. One group stated that they emphasize their social activities, especially bridge playing. Another exists primarily to support the university, such as members offering to serve as ushers at university activities, etc. Another features lectures by professors in huge classrooms typically attended by 100-200 people. In a new Southern California LIR, only one-third to one-half of the membership have participated in any way.

Some have book discussion groups, acting classes, foreign policy debates and wonderful tours, e.g. San Francisco opera previews. The featured speaker was from England. She discussed the worldwide learning-in-retirement movement. The French think that they began it all (wrong - it was started in the U.S.), and they foster meetings (in French) all over the world. The U.K. at 80,000 LIR members exceeds the LIR membership in the U.S., even though their population is less than a fourth of ours! The highest percentage of LIR involvement is in .....Australia! Who would've guessed it?

We came away with several methods of possibly tightening our CSUDH relationship, and a broader feel for the whole LIR movement.

- Although the meeting was of some value, we felt that our interface last year with SAGE, a fellow peer-learning group in the Valley, was even more useful. From them came the idea for modifying our Forum format, which has proven highly successful for us. As a result I'm planning to set up a joint meeting in the near future between the present officers of all three of the Southland peer-learning groups, OMNILORE, PLATO and SAGE.
- Thanks to the Forum committee led by Patricia Morris and Emil Raulin, and members Lindie Banks, Ginger Engstrom and Ronnie Saunders. We've had two very successful meetings this year with each one sporting double the typical attendance of our prior format.
- Noting EIN's 10th year celebration reminds me that Omnilore will also be celebrating our 10th year at our October Annual Meeting. At this writing I'm happy to report that all the original group of ten people are still kicking and scratching; I hope to see them all at our October affair.
- Have a safe, warm, fruitful, happy summer.

**BRAINSTORMING SESSION SET**

A brainstorming session to come up with topic ideas for the Spring semester will be held at the Knob Hill campus Thursday August 19 from noon to 2 p.m. Curriculum committee members will be available to assist participants in writing up course descriptions. Bring a sack lunch and your ideas for what might be fun and stimulating to study.



**CHESS CLUB SEEKS MEMBERS**

The chess club is seeking new members, according to Mary O'Neill, chairman. The group meets the first Friday of every month at 10 AM in room 7. Interested persons are asked to call Mary at (310) 395-0415.



**OmniLore News**

Comments and input can be sent to



**OMNILORE CSUDH**  
**P.O. Box 7000-236**  
**Redondo Beach, Ca. 90277**  
**Phone (310) 540-6011**

**What Makes a Successful S/D Group?**

*Editor's note: Following is an analysis of another outstanding S/D group "Understanding the Religion of Islam." This is the third in an ongoing series. If you have had a similar experience, please share it with us! Maybe we can figure out how to make all of our S/D groups outstanding.*



**UNDERSTANDING THE RELIGION OF ISLAM**

Lloyd Money & Etta Tourkin,  
Coordinators

Understanding Islam was so popular, the class split into two groups: politics and religion. The following is a summary of surprises presented at the sessions on the religion of Islam.

While the Koran advocates generosity, beauty, and inspiration, the practice is often a source of conflict, violence, and fanaticism.

When the Dark Ages existed in Europe, Islam was at its height as the Golden Age of Culture and Learning.

It is not always easy to separate the religion from the politics. Why is it politically correct to say Ethnic Albanians and not Muslim Albanians? What is meant to be cleansed?

Muslim is not interchangeable with Terrorist or Extremist.

The vast majority of Muslims are not Arabs and not wealthy.

The three biggest Muslim nations are Indonesia, Pakistan and Bangladesh.

The Black Muslims (originally spelled Muslems), began as a way of empowering ghetto men who had been forced from home so women would receive welfare.

Within the Islamic communities, questions arise as to whether leadership is bestowed by consensus or by line of descent from Mohammed; is predestination implied and if so, why should individuals live a "good life"; is it really possible to eliminate distinctions between the secular and religious in government; why is the birth of a son celebrated with joy and the birth of a daughter as if a death had occurred?

Etta passed around rose water to help us get into the mood for mysticism

**UCLA Museum Tour Set for July 22**

by Ellen Bradford

Two dramatic exhibits at the UCLA Fowler Cultural Museum contain marvelous examples of textile masterpieces from Indonesia and China. The Omnilore Museum Explorers are offering a chance for members to attend these exhibits on Wednesday, 22 July.

"Walk in Splendor" presents the ceremonial dress of the Minangkabau of Indonesia and has a spectacular array of 250 works -- ceremonial textiles and accessories - - and celebrates their finest weaving traditions. The magnificent silk textiles and garments are ornate with gold and silver patterns. These are accompanied with bejeweled gold and silver accessories and towering, opulent headdresses.

"Threads of Light" presents thirty works of art representing the pinnacle of contemporary Chinese embroidery from Suzhou, China's famous center of embroidery since the 11th Century.

Among the works are a series of 13 large-scale embroideries based on the photographs of Robert Glenn Ketchum, whose photos of ancient embroideries led to the re-creation of these marvels —some are two sided embroidery hung in air with no visible knots or thread ends.

The Museum Explorers group will leave the Knob Hill parking lot at noon on 22 July and car pool to the Fowler Museum. If you are interested, call Ellen Bradford at (310) 791-0391.

but Norman Lobsenz refused to demonstrate the whirling dervish dance he had seen in Turkey. Frank Wolf told of his adventures in a Muslim world, but his wife refused to wear the "chador." Virginia Proctor highlighted the many comparisons between Christianity and Judaism and Islam. Helen Leven cooked a delicacy served at the conclusion of Ramadan. We learned: we laughed; we studied. We're ready for more study.

**Omniorians Enjoy a Museum Tour of Downtown Los Angeles**

If you had forgotten, or never knew, that downtown Los Angeles is brimming with historic landmarks, beautiful old and new buildings and lush green plazas complete with stunning fountains and sculptures, then you should have participated in the annual downtown walk led by John Taber, on April 9. It was a day of enlightenment and adventure.



We rode the Blue Line, the Green Line and finally the Red Line to Pershing Square. John led us on his planned itinerary, dispensing wonderful bits of information about all we were seeing and experiencing.

At our first stop, Bidly Mason Park we learned about an inspiring African American woman who, born a slave, walked from the South to Los Angeles, became a midwife and founded an orphanage.

We saw the Bradbury building, built in 1893 and rode Angels Flight to the top of Bunker Hill. We descended the Bunker Hill Steps (similar to the Spanish Steps in Rome) delighting in the sculptures and lush vegetation at every level. We strolled through the always elegant Biltmore Hotel. We walked through the Grand Central Market and had a delicious lunch at Clifton's Cafeteria (yes Clifton's is still there and still good.). We admired a number of the old theaters that have always populated this area. Some are still in use and many have been refurbished. We visited the Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising and enjoyed an exhibit of costumes from current movies. We saw sculptures and murals and gardens and fountains, many of them developed under Los Angeles' 1% program. (1% of the budget for any new building is devoted to public art.) We arrived back home around 4PM, most of us determined to go back as soon as we can.

If you missed the walk this year, mark your calendars for next year. It is usually held the 3rd Friday in April.

**OMNIOLORE PROFILE**

**Ralph Brown — Head Coordinator**

Have you noticed changes and variety in the approach to presentations in your study/discussion groups lately? If you have, there is one man who deserves the credit--Ralph Brown. As head coordinator, Ralph has not only trained coordinators on how to do their job most effectively, but he has also held workshops for OMNIOLORE members on techniques for making memorable presentations.

Ralph is one of the few Omnilorians who can claim to be a native Californian. Raised in San Diego, Ralph graduated from the University of Colorado in Boulder where he majored in business with an emphasis on retailing.

Before entering the Army, Ralph worked briefly for J.C. Penney as a management trainee. Following his discharge, he returned to San Diego, married Mary, whom he had dated in college, and became a right-of-way agent for CalTrans, for whom he did real estate appraisals on land they procured for the state highway system.

Ralph stayed on the job for 15 years during which time he became the father of three sons and began teaching evening classes on real estate and appraisal at the adult high school and community college level. The fact that his students were taking the courses as non-credit classes posed a challenge to him--how could he motivate non-

credit students to keep returning to class? He quickly realized that lecturing was not the answer. What he needed to do to create an exciting learning environment was to have the students play an active role, a formula that he found also succeeds in OMNIOLORE.

While working for CalTrans Ralph also appeared in court as an expert witness in condemnation property cases involving fair market value.

As a right-of-way agent, Ralph was a member of the International Right of Way Association, an association of 11,000 persons in the United States and Canada involved in acquiring land for governmental agencies.

While reading the association's magazine, he ran across an ad for someone to head up their educational program at the organization's headquarters in Los Angeles. Ralph was offered the position of staff vice president in charge of educational programs. He moved his family to Rocky Point on the Palos Verdes peninsula and in his new position developed new programs, instructed and evaluated teachers, monitored existing courses, selected teachers, developed text books and course materials, developed special programs for regional seminars and international meetings, and did a lot of public speaking.

Ralph remained with the association from 1974 to 1990, at which time, for retirement benefit purposes, he

went back to work for CalTrans as a review appraiser in Orange County.

Although he officially retired from full-time employment in 1994, Ralph has worked part time as a review appraiser for the past five years. He has continued teaching courses in appraisal and the real estate field for the International Right of Way Association.

Besides hiking, traveling and swimming (Ralph always participates in the New Year's Day swim at Cabrillo Beach), Ralph has had another hobby for the past ten years--thrift store shopping at stores that help worthy causes. Everything he wears and everything under his Christmas tree comes from a thrift shop. And he can boast some good finds: a Windsor art nouveau chair which he recently refinished, an 1835 English square piano, and an Armani leather jacket he discovered at a Fresno Salvation Army. For the past five years, Ralph has served as a volunteer at Little Company of Mary thrift shop. What Ralph likes most about Omnilore is the fact that everybody can feel safe: it's an accepting group. There is room both for the scholars and the persons who can benefit from those with greater experience. The goal, according to Ralph, is to learn different views, and there are many ways to get there.



We Want To Know!	KEYS	REMINDER
<p>We want to know if you know of any member in our midst who is having difficulty of any kind. Omnilore members want to respond with offers of help, a phone call, flowers or whatever. Please notify Rose Shields, at (310) 537-1437.</p> 	<p>Please, please, please, if you are no longer a coordinator or co-coordinator, please contact Gloria Jacobs, 378-3206, to arrange for returning your keys and receiving your \$10 deposit back. Others need the keys.</p> 	<p>If you are the last group to leave either of the classrooms, please remember to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ Put away coffee pot and fixings</li> <li>⇒ Shut off all lights</li> <li>⇒ Close all windows</li> <li>⇒ Lock Doors</li> <li>⇒ Turn off heat</li> </ul> <p>Don't assume another group is coming in!</p>

### Omnilore Welcomes New Members

Omnilore is delighted to welcome 8 new members who have joined this spring. Please add these new enrollees to your roster. If you run into them in your S/D Group say hi!

**Preeeesenting...**



Norma Berg	328-5562	2595 Plaza del Amo #424, Torrance, 90503-7349
Richard Fox	374-7717	2023 Voorhees Ave., Redondo Beach, 90274
Dorlas Gimp	376-3203	2120 Carnegie Lane, #1, Redondo Beach, 90278-3616
Fran Hill	377-4948	29 Cypress Way, Rolling Hills Estates, 90274
Manuela Matute	375-3975	421 Via Pasqual, Redondo Beach, 90277
Fernande Stewart	320-2117	3210 Merrill Drive #25, Torrance, 90503
Jean Wilder	832-2982	3503 Carolina St, San Pedro, 90731
Marge Winston	372-8026	1640 Havemeyer Lane, Redondo Beach, 90278-4715

Also please change your roster to reflect the following change. George Crane's new address and phone number are: 4151 Via Marine, #306, Marina del Rey, CA 90292, phone (310) 305-1656.

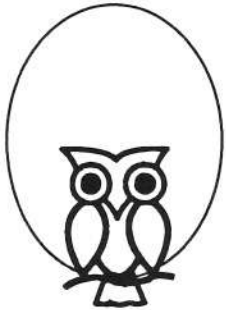
## OMNIOLORE CALENDAR 1999

July	8	Board of Directors' Meeting
August	4	Distribution of Annual Enrollment Forms
	12	Board of Directors' Meeting
	15	Deadline for September Newsletter
	18	Annual Enrollment Due
	27	Summer Session Ends
September	1	Fall Session Begins
	1	Deadline for Spring S/D Group Topics
	6	Labor Day
	9	Board of Directors' Meeting & Publication of Agenda for Annual Meeting and Nominating Slate for Year 2000 Officers
	28	Spring S/D Group Registration Forms Distributed



**IMPORTANT**

Please Note: All changes and additions to the Omnilore Calendar must be cleared with the Vice President, Administration, Gloria Jacobs (310) 378-3206 in order to avoid conflicts in scheduling or use of rooms.



**Omnilore, CSUDH**  
**Division of Extended Education**  
**P.O. Box 7000-236**  
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