

# DIABLO VALLEY COLLEGE RETIREES ASSOCIATION

# NEWSLETTER


September 8, 2021

## DVCRA Fall Lunch - October 8th

In Person ~ On Campus

Put it on your calendars! On Friday, October 8, the DVC Retirees Association will once again (after last year's furlough) meet for its semi-annual, in-person luncheon.

Guided by the input from our survey after last spring's Zoom event, barring significant changes in CDC guidance or unhealthy air from wildfire smoke, we will hold the event **outside** in the beautiful new DVC Commons area in front of the Bistro (the old cafeteria). This area provides a lovely and safe outdoor setting in which we can gather with old friends and colleagues to touch base and catch up on what has happened to us in this last 18 months of separation. No speakers or program this time round -- just time to reconnect.

 **Parking:** As usual, for this event you may park in Lot 7 or 8 without fear of getting a ticket. Access to the Commons area is straight up the campus entry stairs from

ticket. Access to the Commons area is straight up the campus entry stairs from Lot 8. For those who would like assistance getting from the parking lot to our meeting place, we will have transportation available via the college's Disabled-Assistance vehicle, which will pick people up in Lot 7 by the BFL Community Conference Room. And given all the changes to the campus in recent years, there will be Student Ambassadors to direct you to the DVC Commons, in case nothing looks familiar!

**COVID Safety:** Although vaccinations have made us safer, COVID has not gone away, so we will do some things a little differently. Rather than having a buffet with communal food and shared serving utensils, DVC's Culinary Arts program will provide individual box lunches (with a vegetarian option). There will be enough outdoor tables and chairs to allow for social distancing based on your personal situation and comfort level. We recommend that you bring a mask, in case you want or need to enter a building, where the bathrooms are, at any time. Hand sanitizer and extra masks will be available for those who want them.

**Silent Auction:** Don't forget to bring your checkbooks so you can bid on silent auction items, such as gift cards and bags from local businesses, a beautiful handmade box with coasters (many thanks to Chuck Cottril), pens (more thanks to Gary Goodshaw), a wonderful cookbook collection (thanks yet again to Gene Hambelton), and a spectacular Carmel weekend getaway (thank you Tim Murphy). More items will be available on the day of the luncheon. Remember that all of the successful bids help us reach our goal of raising an additional \$3,500 to fully fund DVCRA's scholarships for 17 of our many deserving students.

**DVCRA Directory:** If you attend the luncheon, you will receive a hard copy of our directory with DVCRA members' contact information. If you are unable to attend the luncheon, the directory will be mailed to you.

**Reservations:** Please make a reservation by sending a check for \$15 made out to **DVC Retirees Association** and addressed to:

DVC Retirees Association  
Diablo Valley College  
321 Golf Club Road  
Pleasant Hill, CA 94523

**Please mail your check so that we receive it by Wednesday, September 29, 2021.**

When you send your reservation, please indicate whether you would like a vegetarian option for lunch.

For questions, please contact Irene Menegas at [imenegas@comcast.net](mailto:imenegas@comcast.net) or 925-286-3692.

**Scholarship Donation:** You may make a scholarship donation by adding any amount to the cost of the luncheon OR including a separate check made out to the **DVC Foundation**, with **DVCRA Scholarship Fund** on the memo line.

Thank you for pre-paying promptly. Your cooperation means that we avoid paying for more lunches than we need. If you have paid before September 29, and if at some time before then, the continuously-shifting COVID situation leaves you no longer comfortable attending, please notify Irene Menegas, and let her know if you would like a refund (or if you prefer to apply your payment towards the scholarship fund).

**Please note:** Much as we would miss your presence, if you are feeling unwell, experiencing any COVID symptoms, or have tested positive for the virus in the week before October 8, please help us to keep everyone safe by not attending.

### **Luncheon Info at a Glance**

**Date:** October 8, 2021

**Time:** 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

**Location:** DVC Commons

**Luncheon cost:** \$15

**DVCRA Scholarship Donation:** Add any amount to the cost of the luncheon OR make out a separate check to DVC Foundation, with DVCRA Scholarship Fund in the memo line.

**Reservation deadline:** Received at DVC by September 29

**Make your check to DVC Retirees Association and mail it to:**

DVC Retirees Association  
Diablo Valley College  
321 Golf Club Rd,  
Pleasant Hill, CA 94523

We are looking forward to seeing you on October 8th! It's been way too long.

Submitted by  
Rachel Westlake

**Also in this issue...**



[Membership Renewal Period Continues](#)

[Financial Report](#)

[Welcome Back](#)

[“Live” Silent Auction at DVCRA Luncheon](#)

[Seeking Auction Donations from DVCRA Members](#)

[Thank You To Our Spring Silent Auction Donors](#)

[Free Audiobook - Find Out How](#)

[Online and On The Ground: COVID Teaching Update](#)

[Be Sure to Vote in the Recall Election](#)

[DVC: Looking Good](#)

[You are Invited to a Writing Round Robin](#)

[Jim Jacobs, DVC Retiree, Publishes Reprisal, His Fourth Novel](#)

[Wildfire Relief](#)

[The Fives](#)

[In Memoria](#)

[DVCRA Board Members](#)

# Membership Renewal Period Continues

Welcome to the new DVC retirees who have joined the Retirees Association. We are so glad to have you with us. And to those of you who have already renewed your membership for 2021-2022, a big thank you.

DVCRA offers us an excellent opportunity to continue to support DVC students through our scholarship program, and also helps us stay in touch with friends and colleagues as well as stay informed about any changes in our retiree benefits.

We had a great start to our membership drive this year with 56 members renewing even before the new academic year started. We do have several members, though, who still need to renew their memberships. If you realize you haven't paid your dues yet, don't delay. **Now is the time to write out your check for \$20.00 to the DVC Retirees Association and put it in the mail.** For your convenience, you can find a copy of the DVCRA Dues and Membership form at this link: [Membership Form](#). Please print and send the form along with your check to the address below.

DVC Retirees Association  
Diablo Valley College  
321 Golf Club Road  
Pleasant Hill, CA 94523

If you have any questions or need help, please contact Sue Shattuck at 925-855-5534 or [sshattuck@earthlink.net](mailto:sshattuck@earthlink.net).

DVCRA would also appreciate any contribution you can make to our scholarship fund. Our efforts to reach this year's goal of awarding 17 students \$1,000 each depends largely on your thoughtful and generous donations. **We are suggesting a donation of \$40** so we can help as many students as possible. If you would like to have a tax deduction for your contribution, please include a separate check made out to the DVC Foundation and write "DVC Retirees Association" in the memo area.

Thank you, and stay safe, everyone! Hope to see you at the October 8<sup>th</sup> luncheon.

Submitted by Sue Shattuck

# Financial Report

For the period January 1 to July 31, 2021

A primary purpose for the DVCRA's fundraising is to award scholarships to DVC students, and we have awarded scholarships for many years. From 2008 to 2021, we have given out a total of \$126,400 in scholarships to transfer and current students. We award and fund scholarships in the spring of each year, and our major fundraising efforts occur during the summer. Consequently, the funds raised in 2021 will be used to fund the scholarships in 2022.

The following DVCRA financial information is for the period January 1 to July 31, 2021:

- DVCRA has \$32,412 in cash held in our bank accounts at Travis Credit Union and the DVC Foundation.
- Our fundraising activities through July 31st (including donations, memberships, and auctions) generated \$10,836 available for scholarships. Subsequent to this date, we have received approximately \$2,800 in donations and membership fees.
- We had \$10,109 in expenditures including \$10,000 for scholarships, \$59 for office expenses and \$50 for the DVC Food Pantry.

The DVCRA Board has approved a goal of 17 scholarships for \$1,000 for 2022. ***To achieve this goal we will need to raise an additional \$3,500 by the end of the calendar year.*** Please bid generously on the items in our Silent Auction on October 8th (see article in the Newsletter) and consider making an additional contribution to the scholarship fund.

We want to thank our members for their continuing generosity to the students of DVC. More than ever our students need our continued support.

Submitted by Chris Leivas

# Welcome Back

It will be so good to see you!

By Karen Castle

As we slowly emerge from COVID lockdown, “Welcome Back.” While Zoom has its advantages, we are looking forward to all getting together SAFELY and in person. It has been way too long.

I want to commend **everyone** for renewing their DVCRA membership and for contributing to the DVCRA scholarship fund. We want to fund 17 scholarships in 2022. We are about \$3,500 away from our fundraising goal. So if you can afford to donate, please do.

No amount is too small to help. Checks written to the DVC Foundation (with a notation that it is for the DVCRA scholarship fund) may be tax-deductible if you itemize.

Fall is in the air. Stay safe, stay happy, and stay in touch.

## “Live” Silent Auction at DVCRA Luncheon

Here are some great items you can bid on in person at our upcoming DVCRA Luncheon on October 8, 2021. All proceeds go toward scholarships for DVC students. Remember to bring your checkbook to the luncheon. Even if you don't bid, you can add something to the fishbowl.

**Two nights in a suite at the Hyatt Carmel Highlands Inn**

arriving Sunday, November 14, 2021 and departing Tuesday, November 16, 2021

See this website for more information:

[Hyatt Residence Club](#)

Value: \$800 donated by Tim Murphy

**A wooden box with a lid, filled with coasters**

Value: \$80 donated by Chuck Cottril

**4 handmade pens**

Value: \$30 per pen (\$120 total) donated by Gary Goodshaw

***Ten Small Plate Brunches: 46 Recipes, Shopping Lists, Production Schedules***

by R. Gene Hambelton, Ph.D. Edited by R. "Rick" Hamilton

Value: \$20 donated by Gene Hambelton

***From There to Here: A Memoir, 1930 - 2018***

by R. Gene Hambelton, Ph.D.

Value: \$21 donated by Gene Hambelton

**Libro.fm six-month membership, the equivalent of 6 audiobooks**

Value: \$90 donated by [Libro.fm](#)

**Orinda Books Gift Card**

Value: \$50 donated by [Orinda Books](#)

**Sloat Garden Center Gift Card**

Value: \$50 donated by [Sloat Garden Center](#)

**Jack's Restaurant Gift Card**

Value: \$50 donated by [Jack's Restaurant](#)

**Diablo Foods Gift Card (a grocery store in Lafayette)**

Value: \$50 donated by [Diablo Foods](#)

**Lunardi's Gift Card (a grocery store with various locations)**

Value: \$50 donated by [Lunardi's](#)

**DVC Book Center Gift Card**

Value: \$25 donated by the [DVC Book Center](#)

This is a partial list as more auction items will be coming in. See you at the Luncheon!

Submitted by Ellen Kruse





# Seeking Auction Donations from DVCRA Members

First of all, a big thank you to our colleagues who have donated items for the silent auction in the past.

**Chuck Cottril** has donated hand-turned wooden bowls, platters, wine stoppers, or covered containers at every luncheon or Zoom event since 2015.

**Clark Sturges** and **Chris Leivas** have donated Giants baseball tickets for many years.

**Tim Murphy** donated four stays at different condos.

**Gary Goodshaw** has donated hand-crafted pens made of various woods and metals.

**Leon Borowski** donated three bottles of fine wines he crafted.

**Barbara Sawyer** donated wine from a friend's winery.

**Ginny Horner** donated a quilted bag.

**Elisabeth van Bavel** donated a necklace.

**Barbara Sawyer, Nancy Zink, Jerry Cross, Marge Lasky, and Katrina Keating** (though not even retired yet) donated books.

**Judy Myers** donated her expertise and family recipe for making toffee.

**Joy Broom** donated a brooch.

**Ellen Kruse** has donated treats from Crispian Bakery in Alameda, wine, assistance at Judy Myers's Toffee Workshop, and homemade face masks.

Perhaps these donations from others inspired you to think of something you could offer. If you have something you'd like to donate, please contact *Karen Castle* at [castle.kg@gmail.com](mailto:castle.kg@gmail.com).

Submitted by  
Ellen Kruse

# Thank You To Our Spring Silent Auction Donors

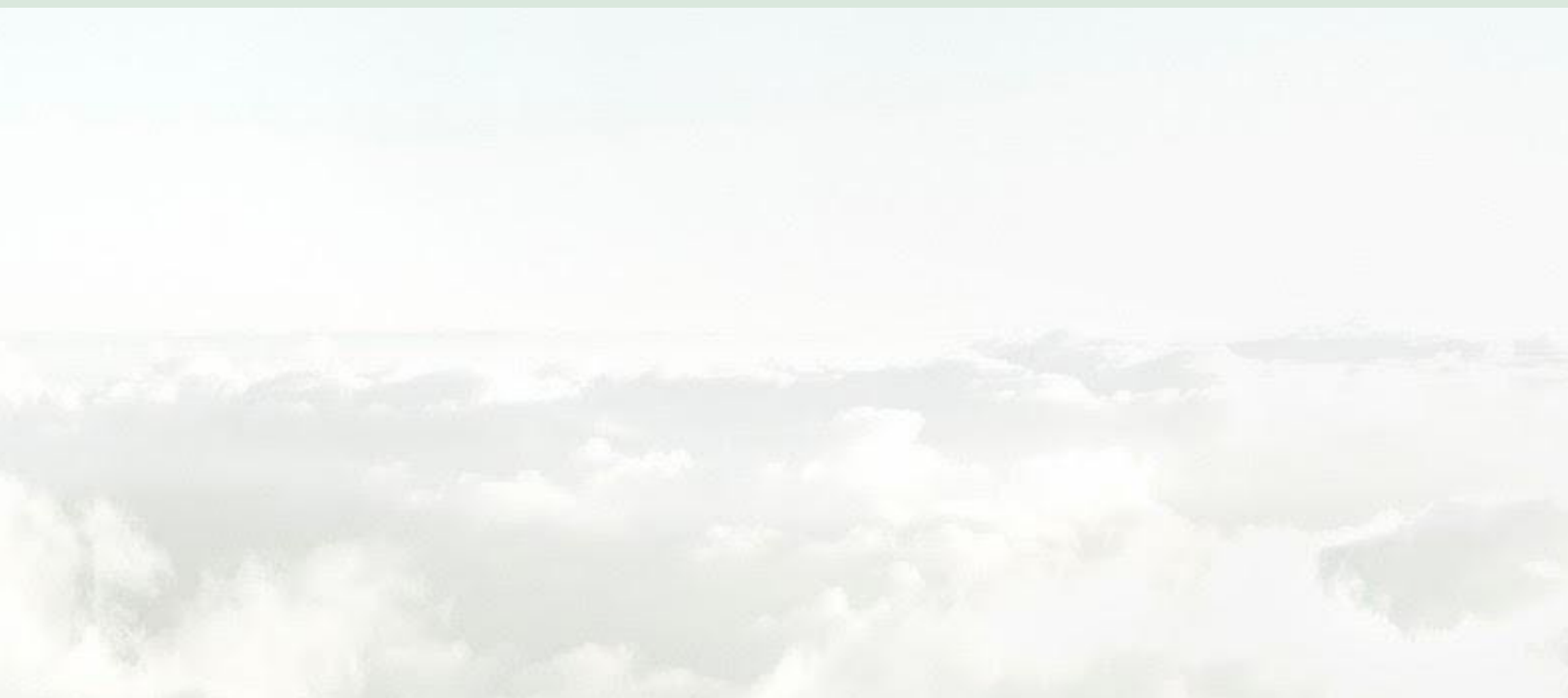
Thank you to the donors listed below for their generous donations to the Silent Auction at our Zoom Event in April 2021. Money collected from our winning bids goes directly to our scholarship fund for DVC's continuing and transfer students. Please take a close look at our current silent auction items, listed earlier in this newsletter, and bid generously at the October 8<sup>th</sup> luncheon; our students need our help more than ever.

| DONOR                           | DONATION                     |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Chuck Cottril                   | Handmade wooden platter      |
| Gary Goodshaw                   | 5 handmade pens              |
| Rachel Westlake and Bill Uhlman | 4 tickets Gold Coast Players |
| Ellen Kruse                     | Masks                        |
| Jack's Restaurant               | 2 gift certificates          |
| Lunardi's Markets               | 2 gift certificates          |
| Trader Joe's                    | Gift bag                     |
| Libro.fm                        | Audiobook membership         |
| Orinda Books                    | Gift card                    |
| COSTCO                          | Gift card                    |
| Sloat Garden Center             | 2 gift certificates          |
| DVC Book Center                 | Gift cards                   |
| Diablo Foods                    | 2 gift certificates          |



submitted

by Nancy Zink





# Free Audiobook - Find Out How

Libro.fm is an alternative to better-known, large corporation audiobooks. Uniquely, Libro.fm works with independent booksellers and shares profits with them. Libro.fm has made two \$90 donations to our silent auctions, one for our Zoom event in the spring and one for our upcoming October luncheon. In addition, they have provided DVCRA a link good for 300 people to have a free audiobook:

John Medina's bestseller, BRAIN RULES FOR AGING WELL.

The code below will work up to 300 times.

## How to listen on [Libro.fm](#)

1. Create [a free Libro.fm account](#)
2. Redeem the audiobook

<https://libro.fm/redeem/BDRBUSGOIU72P89F>

3. Listen on the [Libro.fm iOS or Android app](#).
4. Contact [hello@libro.fm](mailto:hello@libro.fm) if you need help.

Submitted  
by Ellen Kruse

## Online and On The Ground: COVID Teaching Update

by Laury Fischer

DVC, like every teaching institution in the world, has been trying to adapt to the evolving COVID situation in their community. Enrollment, class cancellations, students-and-faculty wanting and willing (or not wanting and unwilling) to come to campus, compliance with rapidly and dizzying changes in health restrictions and requirements – it has been quite a challenge. As of the writing of this article, DVC has been open for one week, and the information and data here represent the

most accurate view I could find at the time.

## **In-person teaching**

The District has mandated that *all* students and teachers be masked when they are in the classroom or any place indoors on campus. So just to be clear, for *all* face-to-face classes, the instructor and all of the students will be masked for the entire time they are in the classroom (this situation is the most common now for college classes across the country, including at UC Berkeley).

For students who are willing to wear masks in class, but forget to bring theirs, the District has made available boxes of masks that faculty can distribute in their classrooms (the District has 800,000 masks available).

If there are students who refuse to wear masks, the District has instituted a series of actions that take into account violations of the student code of conduct.

## **COVID on and off campus**

The District in collaboration with Faculty and Classified Senates and Unions have been discussing a vaccine mandate for all employees and students but as of September 1<sup>st</sup> it has not been approved. At a recent Academic Senate meeting, Kim Schenk, acting VP of Instruction (and almost retiree) indicated that she thinks that "All employees will be required to have proof of vaccination by Nov 1." The mandate had been approved at the Chancellor's Cabinet meeting and will be on the Board's September Agenda for approval

The plan would be that students who are not fully vaccinated by the deadline would *not* be removed from classes but would be *unable* to register for the spring semester. There would be some exceptions for medical and religious reasons.

Susan Lamb, President of DVC, announced that employees are required to submit a record of all on-campus attendance each time they visit regardless of how much or little time they are on campus. In addition, students and employees are required to complete a self-assessment prior to coming to campus each day. I have talked informally to colleagues, and according to them, literally no one is actually doing this.

## **Enrollment**

Susan Lamb announced on August 26th that for the fall semester, DVC had approximately 16,000 students enrolled -- *about a 19% drop in enrollment* since 2019 (the latest this data was available). The student body demographics continue to reflect the diversity of the community the college serves.

### Student Body Racial Demographics

|                    |     |
|--------------------|-----|
| Students of color  | 67% |
| Asian              | 18% |
| Hispanic-Latino    | 27% |
| Black              | 5%  |
| White              | 34% |
| Multi-Ethnic       | 9%  |
| Non-Resident Races | 8%  |
| Unknown/Undeclared | 6%  |
| Full-Time Students | 37% |
| Part-Time Students | 63% |



(All statistics from Data USA <https://datausa.io/profile/university/diablo-valley-college>).

Anecdotally, Dorian Eidhin, English Department chair, mentioned that typically about 100 classes across the college are in danger of being cancelled at the start of fall semester; this semester the number was closer to 400.

**Online or in-person learning?**

In general, for fall 2021, faculty and students had three options for how their classes were going to be conducted:

(1) *Face-to-Face Classes*: Traditional in-person learning, the model we are most familiar with. Students commute to campus, come to a classroom, teacher teaches during prescribed time period. Business as usual.

(2) *Synchronous Classes*: Students and teacher sign into a ZOOM class for a certain time (once or twice a week). There is no *in-person* component to these classes, but students are expected to be present in class during these live sessions – just as they would be for face-to-face classes. Students have the option to have their videos on or off during class, but there is live interaction between teacher and students, and students work in real time with other students—just as they do in person. Office hours are conducted online. Synchronous classes are supported by assignments, videos, discussion boards, etc. that are posted on a learning platform (called Canvas) that all students and faculty have access to.


(3) *Asynchronous Classes*: Students log into the learning platform (Canvas) to obtain assignments, watch videos created or uploaded by faculty member, post to other students on discussion boards, etc. There are *no required “live” sessions*; students work at their own pace, on their own schedule during the week and submit assignments online on the prescribed dates. Office hours are conducted online, perhaps the only time the instructor will see a live version of their students.

In May and June, when COVID seemed to be subsiding, and people were starting to feel a little safer, all faculty (at least all faculty in the English Department, my department) were given the option of teaching in any of these three formats. I mistakenly assumed that instructors would come rushing back to teach on campus. I thought that the majority of students would push to be back on campus.

I was wrong.

Using English Department transfer-level composition courses as a guide (English 122, 123, 126) – I think a relatively reliable one -- I was surprised to see that overwhelmingly, faculty had decided to teach *asynchronously* (i.e. online with no “live” sessions). Synchronous courses were the least offered and the most cut.

The chart below lists the English transfer-level composition courses that have enough students to remain on the schedule for fall, 2021; the chart dramatically reveals that the preference is for asynchronous classes.

|              | Face to Face |     | Synchronous |     | Asynchronous |     | TOTAL  |
|--------------|--------------|-----|-------------|-----|--------------|-----|---|
| English 122  | 17           | 24% | 9           | 11% | 49           | 65% | 75  |
| English 123  | 3            | 12% | 1           | 4%  | 21           | 84% | 25  |
| English 126  | 2            | 14% | 2           | 14% | 10           | 72% | 14  |
| <b>TOTAL</b> | 22           | 19% | 13          | 11% | 80           | 71% | 114   |

It's difficult to know how to interpret the long- or even the short-term benefits and consequences of these enrollment patterns (well, one is easy: for the first time in 35 years at DVC, I had a class (synchronous) cancelled due to low enrollment).

I think the long-term results and implications of what we have learned from online teaching will be significant but impossible to predict. Every faculty member, including reluctant ones like me, have learned how to teach online, and thought quite a lot about whether they find it enjoyable and effective. And many have found it both.

The same is true for students; although many will come back to campus when things are completely safe, some won't. For a variety of reasons (environmental, health, expense, family situation, convenience, learning and teaching style), I assume that many faculty and many students will prefer to teach and learn online even when it is safe to return. There will be more demand for online classes; DVC, responsive to community preferences, will offer more online classes. More faculty, not just younger faculty, but veteran instructors, will readily agree to teach online classes.

And yet.

How it will affect the students' college experience, staff meetings, community events, professional development, even collegiality is impossible to predict. For me, so much of my experience at DVC was casual and chance encounters in the hallways, in the parking lots, at the mythical water cooler. I would run into students in the library, the book store, in line for food; I would chat with colleagues I barely knew on the way into and out of meetings; I had gained a greater sense of community in the casual day-to-day workings of the college. That was an invaluable part why I loved working on this campus so much.

I imagine there will be a complicated balance of much that is gained. And sadly, much that will be lost.



# Be Sure to Vote in the Recall Election

This is a reminder to VOTE in the gubernatorial recall election. All registered voters should have received their ballot in the mail. You can vote by mail (recommended that you vote by Sept. 9<sup>th</sup>; you must have your ballot postmarked before Sept. 14<sup>th</sup>).

DVCRA Board is prohibited from endorsing candidates, recall elections, and making recommendations other than PLEASE VOTE.

As you know, the governor of the state plays a significant role in the funding of our community college system and shapes policies that affect students as well as retired (and current) employees. I am hoping all our readers cast this important vote.

**Must be postmarked by September 14. VOTE TODAY.**

Submitted by  
Laury Fischer

## DVC: Looking Good

By Laury Fischer, Newsletter Editor

Whether or not you are able to attend the October 8<sup>th</sup> luncheon on campus, when you have some time and feel comfortable, you should come to the Pleasant Hill campus, walk around, and see how much has changed.

Depending on when you are here, you'll see students, staff, faculty, and the usual thrum of activity – or, if you come during the weekend, depending on when you were last here, you will note lots of changes – most of them still in progress, many of them invisible – for now.

**What's going on?**

**Interest areas**

## Interest areas

One of the most interesting changes, both visible and invisible, is the creation of academic *Interest Areas* (IA) – five academic areas located in various places around campus that reflect an approach to education that DVC now endorses: Guided Pathways. The thinking and research behind Guided Pathways is that “college students are more likely to complete a degree in a timely fashion if they choose a program and develop an academic plan early on, have a clear road map of the courses they need to take to complete a credential, and receive guidance and support to help them stay on plan.” ([from the Community College Research Center](#)).

DVC’s Interest Areas cover the full-range of academic offerings at the college:

- Arts, Communication, and Language
- Math and Engineering
- Science and Health
- Social Science
- Business, Computer Science, and Culinary Arts

There are also two additional Interest Areas: (1) the Academic Student Center (ASC) on the PH campus and (2) the entire San Ramon Campus has been designated as a separate IA. Check [here](#) for an overview



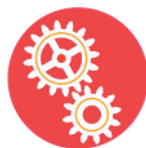
Pleasant Hill  
ASC



Arts,  
Communication  
and Language



Business,  
Computer  
Science and  
Culinary



Math and  
Engineering



Science and  
Health



Social  
Sciences



San Ramon  
ASC

Each Interest Area will ultimately have a Student Center which will be physical manifestation of the philosophy and spirit of the Guided Pathways and the Interest Areas.

At the Student Centers for *each* of these IAs, the college will provide an informal gathering space for students, tutoring in specific subject areas, faculty holding office hours there, zoom zones, food, places for study groups, and the possibility of performances, readings, discussions, giveaways – all in an attempt to make



or performances, readings, discussions, giveaways – all in an attempt to make students feel more at home on campus and give them the support they need to succeed here. Each Student Center will have an assigned Student Services support person and a Counselor who will see students in both formal and informal settings.

For example, English, Arts, Communication, and Foreign Language will have a Student Center located in the four classrooms immediately in front of the Performing Arts Center. You can see this Student Center on the day of the luncheon; it's adjacent to the Student Commons where our luncheon is being held. Although very few students will be present on October 8<sup>th</sup>, you can imagine a central location where students interested in these subjects can hang out, study, get help, and have some fun.

In short, each Interest Area and Student Center will build community – so important at every college, and especially at community colleges.

Before they even start their first classes, students will be invited in numerous ways to join a Guided Pathway that matches their academic interests and goals. Take a quick tour [here](#) if you want to get a basic sense of what students see when they start to explore our offerings and what will make DVC an outstanding educational experience for each of them.

## **What's going up?**

Even during the pandemic, construction on numerous campus projects continued. This is an incomplete update but will give you a sense of the scope of what's being built on campus – all of this work is in progress.

## **Art Complex**

DVC's brand new [Art Complex](#) will probably open in February 2022, and this site will bring all of DVC's art programs under one roof, a roof located on the NE corner of campus between the Performing Arts Center (PAC) and Kinesiology buildings. This new two-story complex will house all of the college's art programs including photography, printmaking, ceramics, sculpture, jewelry, woodworking, painting and drawing, art-digital media, art history, film, television, and electronic media.

Here is the architect's rendering of the Art Complex:



Here is a photo of the actual work in progress  
(photo by Toni Fannin, August 26, 2021)







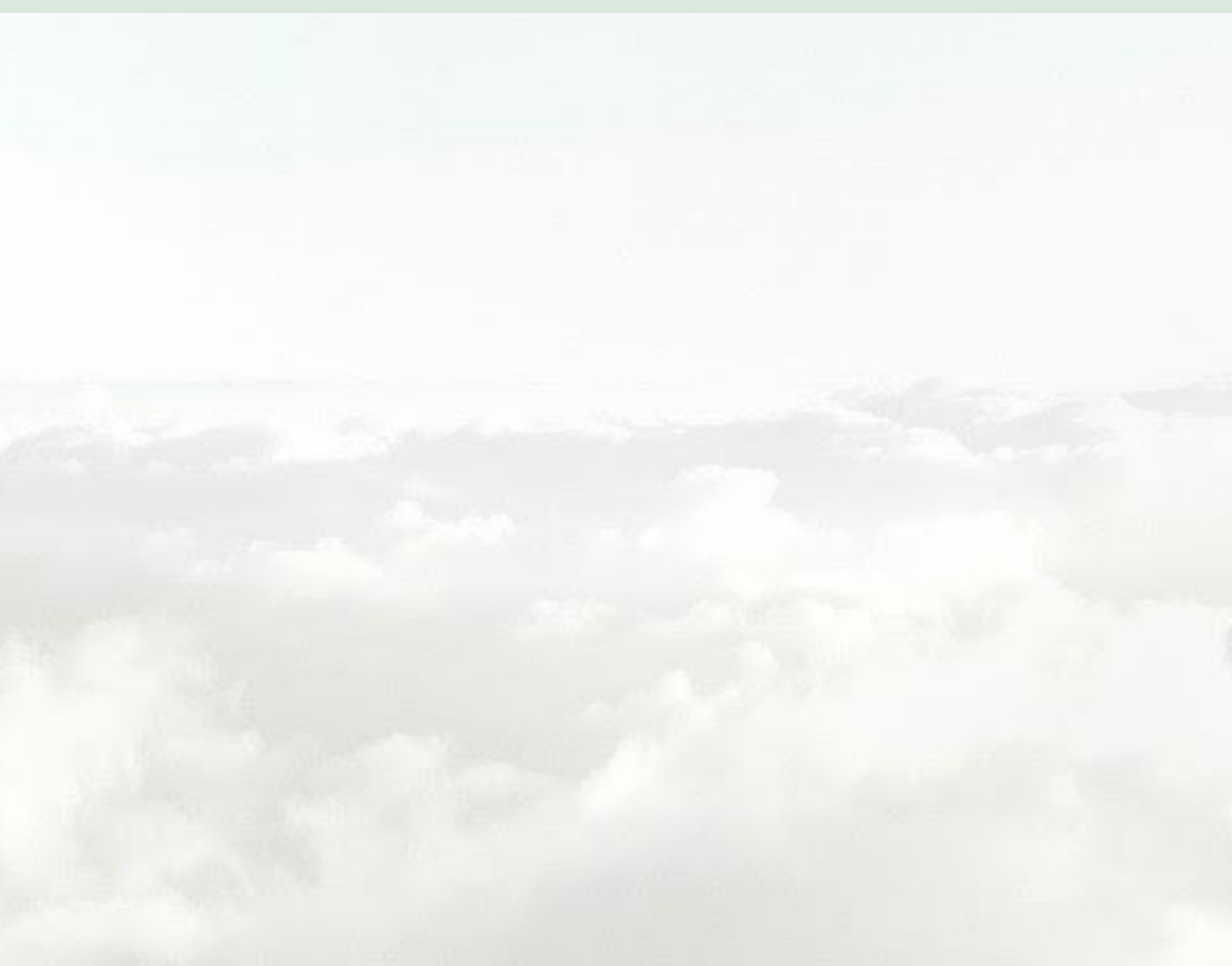
## **Athletics and Kinesiology Complex**

The Athletics and Kinesiology Complex on the Pleasant Hill Campus is also going through a major facilities upgrade. The upgraded facility will include a new “fieldhouse” and an adjoining building that will include an equipment room, team meeting rooms, locker rooms for 17 sports plus general use, classrooms, a training room and lab as well as offices for kinesiology and athletics faculty.

In addition there will be major renovations to the swimming pool and gymnasium.

## **San Ramon Campus**

In an attempt to make the San Ramon campus experience more equivalent to the Pleasant Hill campus and more appealing to students, work has begun to improve food services, expand the Book Center, and create more specialized learning spaces. A new building on the SRC will house a new library, learning center, and tutorial spaces.



# You are Invited to a Writing Round Robin

by Ellen Kruse

What is it? A group of people interested in writing agree to write for 10 minutes a day and respond to a partner's writing with 2 positive comments. That's it. Not a big commitment, but a way to stretch and exercise those writing and reading muscles.

At our last Zoom event in October, I led one of the breakout rooms and introduced a group of people to the Writing Round Robin. We wrote and responded to each other for a month and enjoyed it so much we decided to do it again in October for 4 weeks.

I will assign partners and suggest prompts. Those who participate will get new partners each week and will write and respond from Monday to Friday. We take the weekends off.

If you're interested, email me, and I will send you a fuller description. We will start on Monday, October 11 and continue for four weeks, ending on Friday, November 5.

[enkruse@comcast.net](mailto:enkruse@comcast.net)

Here's what Marti Martin, who participated in the last Writing Round Robin, has to say:

*If you have any interest in writing, please consider joining our round robin. I found the last one to be challenging and fun. I "met" some new people as we changed partners, and it was most interesting to read the different takes people would have on the same topic. It isn't a big time commitment, and it is most enjoyable. Marti Martin*

# Jim Jacobs, DVC Retiree, Publishes *Reprisal*, His Fourth Novel

Jim Jacobs, retiree from DVC's English Department, recently published *Reprisal*, the fourth and final novel in the Daniel Mendoza series. Like his two previous historical-action novels in this series, *Transgressions*, (2010), *Days of the Dead* (2015) and *No Reprieve* (2018), *Reprisal* is set during Mexico's 'dirty war' or *guerra sucio* (1968--76) against political dissidents.

In *Reprisal*, Daniel's daughter and adopted son are abducted from their rural college by members of the Federal Security Directorate and taken to the worst prison in Mexico City (modeled after the notorious Lecumberri Prison) charged with 'social dissolution,' the most serious crime against the state.

With the help of his friends and a once-great but destitute film director (Emilio 'El Indio' Fernandez who won the Palme d'Or at the Venice Film Festival in 1944), Daniel develops an audacious plot, including infiltrating a government-protected crime syndicate, to free his children.

*Reprisal*, and all of Jim's works, are available here: [www.jamesajacobs.com](http://www.jamesajacobs.com)

Submitted  
by Laury Fischer



# Wildfire Relief

It is difficult to know how many of our colleagues, students, or retirees are being affected and displaced by the horrific wildfires this year. The Air Quality Index has risen above 500 in Sacramento and is frequently over 150 in Pleasant Hill. The Foundation for California Community Colleges is organizing donations to help wildfire victims. Their [website](#) is an excellent place for information and to make a donation.

Submitted by  
Laury Fischer

## The Fives

**Editor's note:** Readers have appreciated and commented on the various kinds of suggestions, tips, recommendations that the Newsletter has been including in recent issues. For the current edition of the Newsletter, I have invited a variety of colleagues to recommend FIVE things that all of us might enjoy. The “five” was arbitrary and contributors took it as such. Some contributed more, some less. I have edited, re-arranged, and occasionally added to their fantastic suggestions. Pick and choose; something here will bring you great pleasure.

Thanks to everyone who contributed, and drop me an email ([LauryFischer@gmail.com](mailto:LauryFischer@gmail.com)) and let us know what we should have included. ~~  
Laury Fischer, Editor

### Susan Goldstein's Five:

#### Writing:

Did you plan to write your memoirs during the pandemic and forget to finish the task? Here's a short-cut that will allow you to cross that off your “to do list.” Get someone to record an interview with you at [Story Corps](#), a site offers tips for how to have a good conversation, explain how to record in person or remotely, allow you to download an app, and, if you choose, add your recording to the StoryCorps' archive at the Library of Congress.

#### Listening:

## Listening.

Many of you already know that [Ted Talks](#) are a fantastic website (and podcast) and a great source of information on a wide variety of topics. TedTalks offer hundreds of videos by experts on a wide variety of subjects. If there's an author you've read, and you want to hear what they are up to now or see what they look like, search here. If you've got a favorite topic, search here too. Each talk is limited to 18 minutes. All available online for free.

Suggested TedTalks by Susan Goldstein:

Novelist Chimamanda Adichie's [The Danger of a Single Story](#) warns of misunderstanding a culture by thinking a single story tells the whole truth for example of Africans.

Shawn Achor on [The Happy Secret to Better Work](#) discusses how positive psychology (like Resiliency Training) can lead to greater productivity.

Isabel Wilkerson, author of [The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration](#), tells the story of African-American migration from the South to the Northern and Western cities in search of better lives.

Four Other Fabulous Ted Talks (suggested by Laury Fischer):

- (1) [Cyber Magic Trick](#)
- (2) [Experiments That Hint at Longer Lives](#)
- (3) [How COVID Reshaped U.S. Cities](#)
- (4) [My Failed Mission to Find God, and What I Found Instead](#)

## Blogs:

Marge Lasky introduced me to a terrific daily political blog with a historical perspective. Heather Cox Richardson, Boston University historian, publishes "Letters from an American" daily on <https://substack.com>. You can subscribe for free (or for extra benefits at \$50/year) and get a fine piece from her every day by email. <https://tinyurl.com/2tuzwvbw>

## Great TV discovery:

Searching for how to stream a film or TV show you've read about? Try [STA](#). It can save you money because it compares prices of shows on different platforms. It includes Kanopy.com which you can access for free with a library



card from many public libraries.

### **Stay centered:**

Need reminders of how to stay centered while meeting the challenges of everyday life? Rick Hanson offers a short, free weekly mailing: “Just One Thing.” Hanson is a Bay Area clinical psychologist, Buddhist practitioner, and author of a number of books of applied psychology including *Hardwiring Happiness: The New Brain Science of Contentment, Calm, and Confidence*. Sign up here: <https://www.rickhanson.net/newsletter-signup/>

### **Elaine Dunlap's Five:**

#### **Local hikes:**

- Wonderful in Walnut Creek with an entrance at the end of Marshall Street at Indian Valley school.
- Don't forget the familiar, but lovely, Lafayette Reservoir is a great paved walk especially after a rain. It's about an hour of easy walking and easy parking.
- The Stream Trail of Redwood State Park is absolutely gorgeous and a walk near Rosie the Riveter in Richmond is very easy and beautifully landscaped.

#### **Book:**

I am currently thoroughly enjoying David (Cloud Atlas) Mitchell's latest -- *Utopia Avenue*, about 60's music in London, a sheer joy to read.

### **Diane Scott-Summers' Five:**

**Walking:** I am walking again usually in the hills of Benicia. These days I am walking a bit more than two miles, and finally seeing other people on the sidewalks, scoping other people's yards and gardens, and loving the views from the higher hills. I can see the Carquinez Strait, the bridges, and the town below. It just feels good to “move” and when I get home I feel refreshed, tired and energized - ready for the rest of the day. Who knew it would be a good thing to walk around the neighborhood a couple of miles at 75 years old? Turns out to be a very good thing.

**Reading:** I don't read much anymore; I listen. I have “[Audible](#)” which I use often when I walk, garden, go a doctor's appointment, or drive to Los Angeles where my

grandchildren now live. I read alternately psychological, philosophical, supernatural, religious, mysteries, and trashy love stories. My most recent listened-to book is *A Return to Love* by Marianne Williams, a book based on the principles in “The Course of Miracles.” (Get a 30-day Free Trial to Audible here: <https://www.audible.com/ep/freetrial>)

**Editor’s Note:** One alternative to Audible is [Libro.fm](https://www.libro.fm), a company that supports local bookstores that has donated to the DVCRA Silent Auction: [Libro.fm](https://www.libro.fm).

**Grandchildren:** I have 17-month-old twin grandchildren and because of COVID and their parents’ work, the grandchildren have spent the last 15 months between their two sets of grandparents. Recently, we have re-discovered the pleasures of taking children to the zoo for the first time or just going to the park. Every new adventure is a joy – as is almost anything with young children. Their eyes, their smiles, their laughter, their energy, their wonder: it’s exhilarating and exhausting. But mostly absolutely WONDERFUL.

**High school friends:** Hanging out with my high school friends makes me feel very young. I have a group of five women who have been getting together annually for the past fifteen years. Someone finds a big house with five bedrooms, sometimes by the ocean, sometimes in the mountains, sometimes surrounded by farm land, and we all appear with lots of food, treats, alcohol, and STORIES. We discuss the topics of the day, catch up on each other’s families, reminisce about high school, and treasure the long friendships that have endured. We take long walks, we go out to dinner, we cook for each other, and we TALK, TALK, TALK. I recently stumbled on my 1961 high school year book and brought it to our last gathering; what fun was that. My suggestion? Spend special time with old friends while you have them; what a gift they are to you and you to them.

**Donating:** I have lots of clutter in my 40-year-old home which I am now, finally, giving to people who can and will use it. I don’t know if the pleasure is in the decluttering of my house or the thought that someone else might be enjoying something that I valued at one time. Probably a little bit of both. Since I am planning to move to Los Angeles to be with my children and grandchildren, there is much to toss or donate. There are lots of organizations out there that need my “stuff” and your “stuff”; I plan to donate – a lot.

## Books:

*The Book of Joy* by the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Tutu with Douglas Abrams. It's a week of conversations between two delightful men in their 80s. Though both are leaders in very different religions, they agree that joy is not reserved for the religious, so what is in their book about joy must be based in science.

*One Simple Idea: How Positive Thinking Reshaped Modern Life* by Mitch Horowitz traces the history and influences of the positive thinking movement. Creative types may find affirmation in Jacob Nordby's little book, *Blessed are the Weird*. And that's "weird" in a good way.

## Documentaries:

Jakob Dylan (son of Nobel Prize-winning Bob) brings back the musical good ol' days in *Echo in the Canyon*. There's only one brief mention of his dad, as the film centered on the Laurel Canyon heyday. The discussions of the cross-pollination that went on in that musical incubator may be of interest to creatives.

*The Other One: The Long Strange Trip of Bob Weir* brings us up to the SF musical scene, with plenty of archival footage, including a taste of a ride on Furthur.

*Above Us Only Sky* documents the making of John and Yoko's "Imagine" album and some of the splash they made at the time. (all available on Netflix).

Laury Fischer adds one documentary to Pam's list: Questlove's *Summer of Soul*, an incredible documentary about the 1969 Harlem Cultural Festival, the least-known American Musical Festival attended by 300,000 people. Beautifully blends news, culture, and incredible music.

## Class and related resources:

[The Science of Happiness](https://www.ggsc.berkeley.edu/) is a free class offered by the [Greater Good Science Center](https://www.ggsc.berkeley.edu/) (ggsc.berkeley.edu), and since none of us are worried about units, and the course is free, it might be of real interest to some of us. From their website: "we believe that doing good is an essential ingredient to being happy and that happiness helps spur kindness and generosity—an upward spiral that



makes our society stronger.”

In addition, the Greater Good Science Center has a wealth of resources to help all of us discover “the science of a meaningful life” including the following:

- [Greater Good](#) Magazine
- [Greater Good in Action](#), a website chock full of actionable exercises to boost your well-being
- [The Science of Happiness podcast](#), hosted by Dacher Keltner
- The [Greater Good Toolkit](#), with 30 science-based practices for a meaningful life
- The Science of Happiness [online class](#) (mentioned above) and the Science of Happiness at Work [course series](#)

## Laury Fischer’s Five:

- Researchers at Harvard and the University of Melbourne have come up with a quick (4 minute), easy, and fun way to measure what they call “verbal creativity.” My wife, who found this site, and I took it individually (Guess what? She’s more creative.) and plan to turn it into a game with teams and family. Give it a try at: <https://www.datcreativity.com/>
- Amazon Prime: \$6 off per month for Prime membership (\$5.99 month vs. \$12.99 per month) if you have valid EBT (Electronic Benefits Transfer) or Medicaid card.
- Rite Aid: 20% off the first Wednesdays of each month (check before you go).
- Budget and Avis car rentals: Up to 30% off for AARP members.
- America the Beautiful Senior Pass: \$20 for annual senior pass or \$80 for lifetime pass which can be used at national parks and federal recreational lands. Restrictions apply (suggested by Irene Menegas – not the restrictions – getting the pass).

## Tom Hurley’s Five (or Six) Books for Our Lengthening COVID-time:

- Louis Menand's *The Metaphysical Club* (2001). This book turned out to be an entertaining tour through the twists and turns of American thought and culture from the decades before the Civil War into the early twentieth century. Menand spends as much time on the quirky lives of these philosophers as on their ideas. He wittily takes his story down rabbit holes you think he'll never emerge from only to burst out into enlightening connections between law, evolution, religion, the long heritage of the Civil War, and America's ongoing struggle to form itself out of its mix of races and ethnicities.

- *Cezanne's Drawings* (2021) edited by Jodi Hauptman and Samantha Friedman. I've never thought much about drawing, so the book was a primer on both the medium and this great artist's experiments with pencil and watercolor. Each page is a delight. I'll pick *The Chateau at Fontainebleau*, a landscape from 1904-05, as an example: vertical and horizontal lines indicating trees and a wall, the tree trunks shaded with gray, green and blue pencil strokes, splotches of varying thickness for leafy branches, and short blue strips and a near-whiteness to suggest a pool or stream in the center. Color, line, absence. The drawing simplifies vision and amplifies it; it makes a new space out of our old world. "One must not reproduce [nature]," said Cezanne, "one must interpret it."

I get it: look at the world, make of it what you will, delight in it, and let it go.

- Jonathan Bate's *The Song of the Earth* (2000). If you love poetry and nature, this book will teach you much about both. "The poem is a clearing," Bate claims, "in that it is an opening to the nature of being, a making clear of the nature of dwelling." This sentence about one particular poem suggests Bate's general thesis: culture is both our interpretation of nature and our way of cutting ourselves off from it. "Dwelling" is the key word here: humans "inhabit" nature with their words; they must also discover how they "dwell" in it—are part of it.

- Emily Wilson's translation of *The Odyssey* (2018). Yes, another translation of a classical classic, but this one breaks with the traditional formal diction we associate with epics and opts for rapid narration, starting with the very first line: "Tell me about a complicated man." Wilson's lively language also reveals the complications of not only Odysseus but also Penelope, Telemachus, and many

complications or not only Odysseus but also Penelope, Telemachus, and many other characters. Her excellent introduction surveys Homer's world with particular insight into the lives of women and slaves.

- And last, two modern classics that I'm counting as one because I read them back to back: Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (1987) and Marilynne Robinson's *Gilead* (2004). Each novel casts light on the other's treatment of the American heritage of slavery, violence, sin and guilt, the secrets of families, and the struggle toward transcendence. Robinson's main character ponders "grace as a sort of ecstatic fire that takes things down to essentials." In their very different ways, these two novels have much to tell us about the power of grace, about suffering alone and together, and about discovering ourselves in our common national history.

## In Memoria

### Rich Wilbanks

Rich Wilbanks, who retired in 1998 as a political science instructor at DVC, passed away on June 12, 2021. Rich earned his BA and MA from the University of Oregon, taught high school in the Acalanes District, and came to DVC in 1969. He served on the Social Science Division Council, the Faculty Senate Council, the United Faculty Executive Board, and the FACCC Board. He was Senate President, UF President, and Faculty Lecturer.

His colleague, Rob Peters, said in his earlier years Rich was a great, wise "voice at the table" especially down in the old DVC Cafeteria.

Rich requested that there be no memorial service, and his family suggests that any memorial donations be made to the Southern Poverty Law Center or to the Bancroft Library at UC Berkeley.

### Vern Duvall

Vernon Duvall, retired chemistry instructor, passed away on February 20, 2021 at the age of 81. Vern was hired at DVC in 1966 and retired in 1998, after thirty-two



years at DVC. Fellow retiree, Manuel Gonzales, wrote that Vern and he were colleagues at DVC for that entire time, and that Manuel admired Vern for his big ideas – “in another era, Vern would have built empires.”

Vern was especially intrigued with the history of the American West, and, at heart, he was a “mountain man.”

## **Marlan Shanks**

Marlan Shanks, retired drama instructor, passed away on August 5, 2021. Marlan graduated from Mt. Diablo High School in 1958, attended DVC for one year, received his BA from San Francisco State University, and then his MFA from UC Davis. During college, he worked at the Ashland Shakespeare Festival. Marlan first taught in the district at Los Medanos College before transferring to DVC as part of the UF’s first grievance process. He retired in 2003 and then served five years as a Professor Emeritus.

Marlan was a charter member of the United Faculty (the renown Gang of 13) and served as Drama Department Chair, Fine Arts Division Chair, Staff Development Coordinator, and a DVC Faculty Senator for many years.

There will not be a public memorial service. As Marlan loved the water there will be a private Celtic Celebration of Life on a Hornblower ship in the next couple of months.

# DVCRA Board Members

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