

## California Classical Association—Northern Section

### Fall 2021 Conference: “The Future of Classics: A Multiplicity of Voices”

Saturday, November 13, 2021, 10:00-11:30 a.m.

Virtual Conference on ZOOM

Sign up at [www.ccanorth.org](http://www.ccanorth.org).

by Sarah Harrell, CCA-North President

**I**n this conference we will explore various approaches to the question: what is the future of classics? As discussed thoughtfully in a recent article in *Inside Higher Ed*, departments in colleges and universities (big and small) are grappling with this question in multiple ways. One answer is to de-emphasize the study of ancient Greek and Latin as the primary elements of a degree in classics. Similarly, there are moves to shift focus away from “classics” and toward a more broadly defined ancient Mediterranean studies. The article calls for continued self-reflection within the discipline of classics in order to make it more diverse and inclusive.

We will have three distinguished panelists to present on this topic, from the perspective of K-12 and higher education: two will present talks and one, who had to cancel for a funeral at the last minute, will send us a video. After the panelists discuss their perspectives, there will be time for open discussion.

### The Panelists:

**Danielle Bostick** is an advocate and Latin teacher in Winchester, Virginia. Her public-facing work has appeared in the *Washington Post*, *Teaching Justice* (formerly *Teaching Tolerance*), *Huffington Post*, and *NBC Opinion*, among other publications. She also has an article on secondary Classics in the *American Journal of Philology* and has a chapter on trauma and distortions of time that will be part of an edited volume on the *Aeneid*.



*Danielle Bostick*

**Rebecca Futo Kennedy** is Associate Professor of Classical Studies at Denison University. She is the author of two monographs: *Athena’s Justice* (2009) and *Immigrant Women in Athens* (2014). She edited Brill’s *Companion to the Reception of Aeschylus* (2018) and co-edited *The Routledge Handbook to Identity and the Environment* (2015) and *Race and Ethnicity in the Classical World: An Anthology of Primary Sources* (2013).



*Rebecca Futo Kennedy*

She is currently completing a book on race and ethnicity in the ancient world and its modern politics, a new sourcebook on women in Greek and Roman contexts, as well as a short historiography on how the ancient Greeks and Roman came to be racialized as “White” in US popular and academic contexts in the 19th-20th centuries. Dr. Kennedy frequently writes on and presents her research for general audiences in numerous podcasts and print media. Her blog “Classics at the Intersections” can be found at <https://rfkclassics.blogspot.com>.

**Dr. Anika T. Prather**, who will send us a video, earned her B.A. from Howard University in elementary education. She also has earned several graduate degrees in education from New York University and Howard University. She has a Masters in liberal arts from St. John’s College (Annapolis) and a PhD in English, Theatre and Literacy Education from the University of Maryland (College Park). Her research focus is on building literacy with African American students through engagement in the books of the Canon. She recently self-published *Living in the Constellation of the Canon: The Lived Experiences of African American Students Reading Great Books Literature*. She has served as a teacher, supervisor for student teachers, director of education and Head of School. Currently she teaches in the Classics Department at Howard University and is the founder of *The Living Water School*, located in Southern Maryland. 🌸



*Dr. Anika T. Prather*

# The California Classical Association Northern Section

## WHO WE ARE AND HOW TO CONTACT AND FOLLOW US

We are the *California Classical Association—Northern Section*, the regional association for Northern California classicists. We hold conferences, produce a newsletter, and maintain close relations with the California Classical Association — Southern Section, the Junior Classical League, the American Classical League, the Society for Classical Studies, the National Committee for Latin and Greek, and the Foreign Language Association of Northern California. In addition, we support the field through scholarships and grants.

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Contact us at our website: [ccanorth.org](http://ccanorth.org)

## Treasurer's Report

by David Jacobson, CCA-North President



Roman-style abacus

**F**or the three-month period (12 June 2021-2 September 21) the total assets of CCA- North were **\$10,912.24** (\$1030.13 in Wells Fargo Checking, \$4,265.44 in Wells Fargo Savings, and \$5,616.67 in PayPal). **Gross Inflows** during this period totaled **\$60.11** in new or renewed Membership dues (\$60.00), and interest gain in the Savings account (\$0.11). **Gross Outflows** during the same period totaled **\$42.00** in Wells Fargo monthly service fees. For this period Inflows exceeded Outflows by **\$18.11**. ✨

## National Junior Classical League Convention Online—Again!

by Dobbie Vasquez, CCA—North Secretary

**A**lthough the national convention was supposed to be in San Diego this year, once again we found ourselves on Zoom and Sched. In spite of a year of online school, some 725 students and 249 adults attended from around the country. California had 45 students, and 8

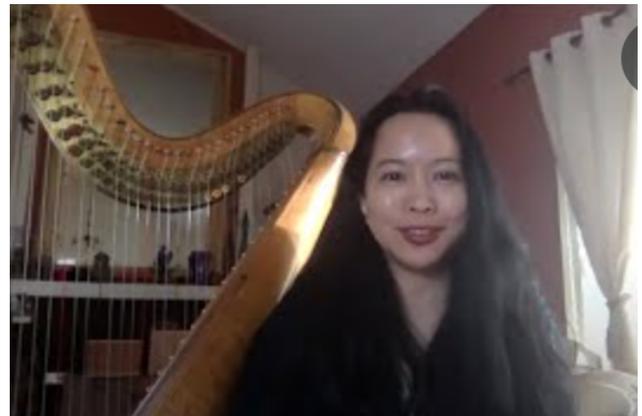


adults, and, for the first time in the 33 years I have been there, we were classed among the extra-large states! We were pleased with ourselves, but we were humbled by the 150 from Texas and the 95 from Virginia. Of the 11 California schools in attendance, 7 were from northern California: Classical Homeschool Day, Harker, Menlo, Menlo-Atherton, Miramonte, St. Francis, and St. Ignatius.

One of the highlights of convention is always the variety of colloquia offered. Usually, the speakers are from the universities and schools of the hosting state, and actually this year was no different. Although they reached out to all states, most of the presentations were from California: 13 recorded presentations from the online State Convention hosted by

Menlo in April and from Bettina Joy de Guzman, an expert in ancient music, who sang poems by Sappho, Pindar, and Catullus while playing on several different replicas of ancient stringed instruments, and our own Muse Lee with “Aristos, the Musical”, which now boasts some in-person video in the production. Personal thanks to Dr. Mary Blum (Living in the Margins: Killer Bunnies, Violent Snails and Other Scribal Mischief), Dr. Kathryn Chew (Bloodsucking Monsters in Greco-Roman Folklore and Myth), Dr. Gina Closs (Nero, Then and Now: Fake News, Dirty Truth, and Mythmaking), Dr. Sanaz Hariri (Q+A: The Road to being a Surgeon (and How Latin Helped)), Rachel Howard (Whose Art is It? Artifacts Looted During and Prior to the Modern Period), Dr. David Jacobson (Face Masks Required: Greek Trajedy in Performance), Frederick Muth (Vesuvius Revisited), Katie Robinson (Stargazing, Science, Mythology and Art), Avy Roy of We Players (Site-Integrated Theatre: Activating the Classics and Transforming the Space), and Lisa Rozakis-Biton (The Great Revolt: Jewish Rebellion Against Roman Rule), all from California, who allowed their colloquia to be offered at the national level. You all make California proud! Watch these presentations at <https://tinyurl.com/njcl2021colloquia>.

The Convention offered the usual 15 tests and *certamen* (both competitive and open), dramatic interpretation, Latin oratory, English oratory, essay, costume, graphic arts (run by Jen Jordt of Menlo School), escape rooms, scavenger hunt, spirit (where CA won 2nd place), assemblies, service projects, get-togethers for different affinity groups, but Olympika morphed into E-lympica push-ups, chin-ups, sit-ups, fitness runs, planks, a marathon, trick-shots, Minecraft, and a geoguesser where students had to figure out where they were on a map. Some 40 adults attended the Zoom gathering for teachers who have retired from teaching or from the NJCL



Bettina Joy de Guzman of California played her ancient instruments and sang songs by Sappho, Sophocles, Catullus, and Ovid.

National Committee.

In the end, some 1315 awards were announced - lots of chances for kids to win recognition. California took home 123 of them including first place for state scrapbook, state publication, and state website. Menlo and Miramonte took first and second in publications, respectively, and Miramonte and Menlo also took first place in various publicity categories.

A number of these awards do not require attendance at convention. They are open to anyone who wants to enter. You can see the non-convention contests at <https://tinyurl.com/nonconvcon> and the online academic tests at <https://tinyurl.com/njclconlexams>. They do require the teacher to be a member of ACL and the student to be a member of NJCL and CAJCL, but JCL and its parent organization ACL exist to serve us. I hope you will take advantage of all they have to offer. As always, I am happy to answer any questions about either ACL or JCL. Just text me at 650-888-2489. 🌸

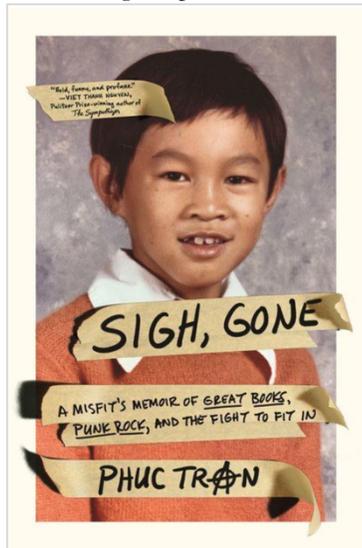
**Book Review:**

**Phuc Tran: *Sigh, Gone: A Misfit's Memoir of Great Books, Punk Rock, and the Fight to Fit In***

by Dobbie Vasquez, CCA—North Secretary

**A**fter hearing Phuc Tran speak at virtual ACL Institute this summer, I immediately jumped to his TEDxTalk “Grammar, Identity, and the Dark Side of the Subjunctive” at <https://youtu.be/zeSVMG4GkeQ>. Never have I found the subjunctive so entertaining! So, of course, I ordered his book from Amazon. Phuc is a Latin teacher for more than 20 years in Maine, owner of a tattoo parlor, and someone with a story to share.

Phuc’s family came from Vietnam at the end of the war in 1975. His grandparents worked for the US embassy so they



were able to evacuate a total of 10 family members. Phuc was the only grandchild born then. They waited together to board one of the over-stuffed buses that would take them to the airfield. Finally it was their turn, and everyone climbed aboard. Suddenly Phuc started to wail, and his grandmother decided they should all get off until he calmed down. They did, and 10 others took their places. As the bus moved off, it

was struck by mortar fire and exploded. No one survived. Phuc’s family boarded the next bus and eventually made it safely to America.

They were finally relocated to Carlisle, Pennsylvania, and started their new lives. The only Vietnamese family in town, they all had to learn to live in two worlds: the one at home and the one around them. As Phuc grew older, he developed a deliberate two-pronged method to be accepted and escape the taunting of his elementary and middle school years: excellence in school (as his parents demanded) to gain at least

the respect of his peers and emersion in full punk with leather jacket, ripped-up flannel, a partially-shaved head of bleached hair, and eventually a skateboard to find a support group.

These were his grounding points. As a page at the local library, he ran across Clifton Fadiman’s *The Lifetime Reading Plan*, a list



Phuc Tran

of the books of the Western canon Fadiman thought educated Americans should read. At first Phuc read in order to be assimilated, but somewhere along the line he realized he was reading for the ideas. The themes of loneliness, love, acceptance, fear of failing spoke to him. He weaves the themes of these books throughout his own work as he

draws parallels from them with his own life. His parents had agreed that, if he kept his grades up, he could spend time with his skateboarding friends, so he was able to continue with the second part of his assimilation plan.

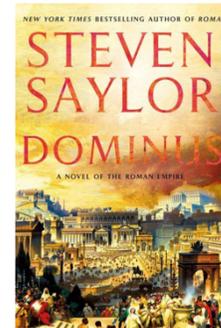
Phuc’s autobiography is both riveting and eye-opening. I found it difficult to put down as he confronted constant struggles while always changing and maturing. He offers us a glimpse into the Vietnamese culture and into the life of a child desperately trying to fit in. He presents his readers with a reminder of the challenges and the beauty of being an outsider. My only regret is that the book was too short. Fadiman should have included it in his *The Lifetime Reading Plan*. 🌸

**Book Review:**

**Steven Saylor: *Dominus***

by Dobbie Vasquez, CCA—North Secretary

Usually, I avoid novels that span generations (7 in this case). I just become invested in one group of people when



another takes their place. By the time I am truly interested in the new group, it too is replaced. I find it something between annoying and infuriating. In this case, however, I felt more curious than upset. For one thing, there is always carryover from the previous generation, and the *gens* is the same. The Pinarii, an ancient family of builders and artisans, spend their lives creating and recreating the art of Rome as it struggles through wars,

plagues, fires and famines. The more turbulent the times, the more commissions they receive from the various emperors,

as father passes his skills on to son generation after generation.



*A fascinum*

comes of age.

The other unifying feature is, believe it or not, the family *fascinum*, gilded and with wings! The Pinarii have no knowledge of when this prized talisman first came into their hands, but they are convinced of its powerful protection, and the *paterfamilias* wears it constantly to ensure the safety of his family until he presents it to his son when he

Around these two constants, Saylor offers a fascinating account of the turbulent times from the reign of Marcus Aurelius to Constantine, a span of about 150 years. He interweaves fact and fiction so carefully that the characters come to life and become both real and memorable. Because the Pinarii are talented architects and craftsmen, they are allowed into the inner circle of the various emperors who commission their work, so we get to see Marcus Aurelius, Caracalla, Diocletian, Constantine and the others up close. One of the most outrageous emperors is the 14-year-old Elagabalus who took the reins in 218 and ruled until 222. He is first introduced to Rome through his portrait, sent ahead ‘so that the senators may accommodate themselves to his appearance’ (p. 234). Unveiled, the image does indeed shock the august fathers, for the new emperor appears predicably young (even younger than Nero when he became emperor) and, more remarkably, dressed not in a purple toga or Roman armor, but in extremely effeminate and ostentatious pantaloons and a gem-encrusted, pleated and gold- threaded purple undergarment of a Parthian priest. Over his shoulders is not the Roman toga but a purple mantle cinched by a gold ring below his waste. His bejeweled boots are pointed, and his golden diadem has at its center a dried bull’s penis which points directly forward. Next to him is the baetyl, a man-sized conical black stone with rounded top, which he is bringing to Rome so that the citizens can worship it as he does. I wish I could have witnessed that unveiling! Soon he marries a Vestal Virgin in order to learn how best to pleasure a man - not a vestal’s strength. It comes as no surprise that the marriage ends quickly and the wife maintains her virginal state. Saylor’s treatment of the new sect in town is also compelling. These Christians at first lurk in the shadows, but eventually, as we all know, Constantine betrays the ancient religion and becomes a Christian himself. That brings me to Saylor’s portrayal of Constantine. Although generally depicted in literature as benevolent as befits the first Christian ruler, here, in accordance with the ancient literature, he is cruel and vindictive and appears to rejoice in bloodthirsty violence. Some of his laws were as brutal as the emperor himself. Any couple who married without the consent of girl’s father was buried alive. Any slave-girl who aided in this elopement was to have molten lead poured down her throat. Any man who kept concubines was to be exiled. (p. 435).

As the Pinarii prepare to leave Rome to travel with Constantine to his new city in the East, Zenobius, the current *paterfamilias*, quotes the Divine Marcus (Aurelius) to his son Kaeso:

‘For everything fades away and quickly becomes a myth. All is forgotten. Everything is lost in oblivion.’ So it will be, even with Rome. So it will be with Constantine’s new city, eventually. So with every human life, and with all humanity, with the passage of time. We shall fade away, and there shall be no one to remember us, for those who come after us will have faded away in their turn. It shall be as if none of us ever existed. (pp. 465-466)

I leave it to you to read Kaeso’s response to his father. I think you will enjoy the journey through *Dominus*. ✨

## Books by Members

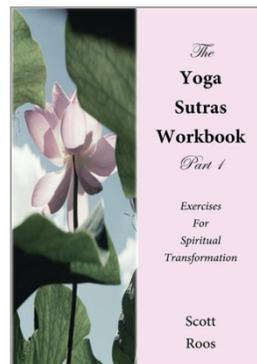
The CCA—North encourages members to submit books they have published for review

**Book Review:**

**Scott Roos: *The Yoga Sutras Workbook Part 1: Exercises for Spiritual Transformation***

by Mary Blum CCA—North Board Member at Large

From the anecdotes to the explanations, from the beautiful pictures to the faithful translations of the Sanskrit text, from the history lessons to the journaling and meditation exercises, *The Yoga Sutras Workbook Part 1: Exercises for Spiritual Transformation* pleasantly surprised me with the discovery of a book on yoga that did not require me to get bendy.



Scott Roos argues that yoga was always an enlightenment system of learning how to rewrite the software of the mind so that we no longer experience suffering. In this first book he outlines a number of practices that I would never have linked directly to yoga, such as fasting, silent practice and the “spiritual technology” available to people of all faiths, including atheists.



Scott Roos

It is evident that Roos is a classicist from the way he explicates text, parses words and renders translations of the sutras from Sanskrit. Additionally, I love that he shares multiple meanings of each word so that the reader can develop a more personally nuanced understanding of the text. Finally, the summaries of the ancient commentaries on the text were both fascinating and useful.

In the end, this book, which is something like *The Artist's Way* meets the *Autobiography of a Yogi*, was both useful and enjoyable; I very much look forward to his next volume.

*Scott Roos, an experienced educator with over 20 years of working with students in various contexts, took his Ed.D. in Educational Leadership from the University of San Francisco, his M.A. in Classics from San*

*Francisco State University, and his B.A. from Stanford University in Classical Dramatic Studies. In addition to Latin and Greek, Dr. Roos studied two years of Sanskrit at the University of California at Berkeley and has extensively trained in Yoga Philosophy with Hart DeFouw and with several teachers in the Krishnamacharya lineage, including Gary Kraftson, A.G. Mohan, and Chase Bossart. Dr. Roos currently runs his own company, Teacher Scott, LLC, providing online academic education as well as consultations in Yoga, Ayurveda, and Jyotisha. Learn more about him on his website: [www.teacherscott.org](http://www.teacherscott.org).* ☀

### Grants, Scholarships, Awards from the CCA—North

by John Rundin, CCA—North Newsletter Editor

**D**id you know that the CCA—North awards several cash benefits to classicists? There are travel grants, scholarships for high school students who intend to study classics in college. Learn more about these opportunities at our website: [ccanorth.org](http://ccanorth.org). ☀



## In Memoriam

### Stephen Miller & Ronald S. Stroud

by John Rundin, CCA-North Newsletter Editor

**T**wo professors emeriti from the University of California, Berkeley, who have had a profound impact on our understanding of ancient Greek material culture, passed away recently. They are Stephen Miller and Ronald S. Stroud.



Ronald S. Stroud

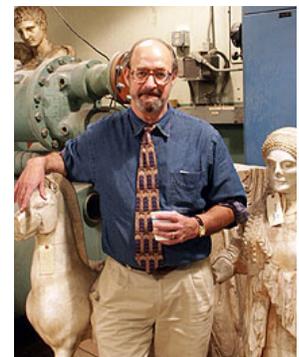
Ronald S. Stroud passed away on October at the age of 88 after a long hospitalization as the result of a fall. He leaves behind a wife, Connie; two children, Melissa and Richard; and four grandchildren.

In a long career from the nineteen sixties till the present, he created a legacy of unsurpassed scholarship in the areas of epigraphy and archaeology while participating the foundation of enduring institutions at the University of California, Berkeley, including the interdisciplinary Group in Ancient History and Mediterranean Archaeology (AHMA) and the Sara B. Aleshire

Center for the Study of Greek Epigraphy.

He leaves behind a vast number of grieving students and colleagues.

Stephen Miller passed away on August 11 at the age of 79 in Greece, where he lived with his wife, Effie, near the site of ancient Nemea, where he directed Berkeley's excavations for decades. Nemea was the site of important athletic competitions in the Ancient Greek world, and his archaeological work revealed important parts of the site including a stadium and track; an entrance tunnel to the track lined with the graffiti of ancient athletes; a temple of Zeus where athletes made sacrifices before competing; an early Christian burial ground; a hero's shrine; a bathhouse; and what's considered the world's oldest remaining athletic locker room. He even revived the Nemean Games in modern times in 1996, one hundred years after the modern revival of the Olympic Games in 1896.



Stephen Miller

He leaves behind many mourning students and colleagues. ☀



**California Classical Association—Northern Section**

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