

PALAC ... where people and ideas meet

STUDY DISCUSSION PROGRAMS SPRING 2024

PALAC offers continuing liberal arts education to adults of the San Gabriel Valley. If you enjoy the excitement and stimulation of discussing ideas in a new learning situation, whatever your educational background, you're welcome in any of PALAC's programs.

With the pandemic receding into recent history and with vaccines available, we are once again offering some groups in homes and the Program Planning Meeting is once again in person! But since we can never be sure about the evolution of the pandemic, our plans regarding holding groups on Zoom, in-person indoors, or outside might change. The locations for all groups appear after the discussion group's description and meeting details. For outdoor groups, if the weather is bad, the leader may choose to hold the session for that day on Zoom rather than outdoors. For groups that are in a park, please bring your hat, chair, and snack. **For all in-person sessions, full vaccination is required.**

JOIN US PALAC offers additional advantages and activities to members. Membership is just \$30 per person or \$50 per couple per calendar year. Call 626 797-2380 for details or mail your registration and check to PALAC, 1015 N. Lake Ave., Suite 108, Pasadena, CA 91104.

REGISTER If you have not already paid your membership dues for 2024 please send them in with your Spring registration form and check to the PALAC office.

Most groups are limited to 13-15 participants. This provides a comfortable, intimate atmosphere for discussion. Early registration will help assure you a place in your selected group. If you register close to the time the group begins, please contact the office to verify group openings. You will receive confirmation of your selected group(s) by email if you have email.

Get your registration form in ASAP. Please! Once again, we will use a lottery system to give everyone an equal chance to get in their chosen groups. For those discussion groups and safaris that are oversubscribed, the office will hold a lottery about two weeks after the program brochure is published. Be sure to get your registration form and payment to the office before the lottery! And don't forget, dues-paying members receive priority.

We will order books three weeks before each group begins. If you plan to drop a group, please let us know before then, or we will not be able to refund you the cost of the book.

New leaders and hosts are the lifeblood of PALAC. Please call the office to volunteer: 626 797-2380.

DATES TO REMEMBER

Program Planning Meeting for Summer & Fall Quarters

Saturday, April 6, 9:30 am – noon
La Casita Del Arroyo
177 South Arroyo Blvd., Pasadena

Spring Potluck

Saturday, June 1, 4:00 pm
at the Wilander's

SPRING SESSION 2024

201 Current Movies, Wednesdays

We will choose the films from any source offered virtually, watch them independently, then meet at El Portal Restaurant in Pasadena for discussion. Participants will pay for the rental of the film. We may also see a movie in person and discuss it afterwards at a nearby restaurant.

Wednesday, 3 pm, Apr 3, 17; May 1, 15; Jun 5, 19

Leader Carol Criqui

Members \$10

Non-Members \$20

Place El Portal Restaurant, inside or outside, Pasadena

202 *The Mansion* by William Faulkner

In this third volume of the Snopes trilogy, set in Jefferson, Mississippi, between 1908-1946, Mink Snopes works to restore his honor and achieve the goal of his life's work. Linda Snopes searches for peace, going as far as Greenwich Village and then on to Spain before returning to Jefferson. Flem Snopes continues to puzzle and worry VK Ratliff, Gavin Stevens, and everybody else. ISBN-13: 978-0307946829

Thursday, 12 noon, Apr 4, 11, 18, 25; May 2, 9

Leader Susan McKinley

Members \$29

Zoom

Non-Members \$39

203 *The Dove Keepers* by Alice Hoffman

Nearly two thousand years ago, nine hundred Jews held out for months against armies of Romans on Masada, a mountain in the Judean desert. According to the ancient historian Josephus, two women and five children survived. Based on this tragic and iconic event, Hoffman's novel is a spellbinding tale of four extraordinarily bold, resourceful, and sensuous women, each of whom has come to Masada by a different path. The lives of these four complex and fiercely independent women intersect in the desperate days of the siege. All are dovekeepers, and all are also keeping secrets -- about who they are, where they come from, who fathered them, and whom they love. ISBN-13: 978-1451617481

Friday, 10 am, April 5, 12, 19, 26

Leader Jane Crane

Zoom

Members \$23

Non-Members \$33

204 *The Economist*

A review and discussion of selected articles from *The Economist* magazine. Participants are sent copies of articles about events and people around the world and they are expected to relate their views on each article.

Friday, 2 pm, Apr 5, 12, 19, 26; May 3, 10

Leader David Whitcomb

Zoom

Members \$10

Non-Members \$20

205 *Movie STARS, Spring 2024 - Group A*

Discussion of critically acclaimed and notable movies, present and past, and from all over the world. Movies selected will be viewed online prior to each meeting. Streaming choices are usually available in free, subscription, or pay-per-view format. Costs will be borne by the viewer. Links to view each movie online are provided for each meeting. For examples of movies from past seasons, email leader - jkliu47@gmail.com.

Sunday, 4 pm, Apr 7, 21; Jun 2, 16, 30

Leader James Liu

Zoom

Members \$10

Non-Members \$20

206 *Movie STARS, Spring 2024 - Group B*

See *Movie STARS, Spring 2024 Group A*

Monday, 4 pm, Apr 8, 22; Jun 3, 17; Jul 1

Leader James Liu

Zoom

Members \$10

Non-Members \$20

207 *Movie STARS, Spring 2024 - Group C*

See *Movie STARS, Spring 2024 Group A*

Monday, 7 pm, Apr 8, 22; Jun 3, 17; Jul 1

Leader James Liu

Zoom

Members \$10

Non-Members \$20

208 *Classic literature through short stories*

This group will explore world classic literature, as viewed through short stories written by internationally prominent authors. Short stories can be read in a short time compared to longer novels and yet reveal many fundamental human situations around the world. Examples include: "The Lady with the Toy Dog" by Anton Chekhov; "The Killers" by Ernest Hemingway; and "The Gilded Six-Bits" by Zora Neale Hurston. Meeting monthly, we will discuss one story each session.

Monday, 12 noon, Apr 8; May 6; Jun 3

Leader Prakash Shrivastava

Zoom

Members \$10

Non-Members \$20

209 *Underground Empire: How America Weaponized the World Economy* by Henry Farrell & Abraham Newman

A deeply researched investigation that reveals how the United States is like a spider at the heart of an international web of surveillance and control, which it weaves in the form of globe-spanning networks such as fiber optic cables and obscure payment systems. ISBN-13: 978-1250840547

Tuesday, 2 pm, Apr 9, 16, 23, 30

Leader Louis Rubenstein

Host Louis Rubenstein

Place Arcadia

Members \$33

Non-Members \$43

210 *The Invention of Nature* by Andrea Wulf

Have you ever wondered about the connection between the Humboldt Current off the coast of Chile and Humboldt County in California? These geographic names trace their roots to Alexander von Humboldt, a remarkable polymath of the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Humboldt's legacy extends far beyond mere namesakes: he laid the groundwork for essential environmental concepts shaping our contemporary understanding of interconnected ecosystems. His awe-inspiring adventures and influential writings resonated with luminaries like Darwin, Emerson, Thoreau, and John Muir. Explore the incredible life and lasting impact of Alexander von Humboldt, a visionary whose ideas continue to shape our perception of the world. ISBN-13: 978-1848549005

Thursday, 7 pm, April 11, 18, 25; May 2, 9

Leader Marie Slonski

Host Joan Stafford

Place Pasadena

Members \$32

Non-Members \$42

211 Developing an Eye for Life - Photography of our Surroundings and Adventures

A photo journey into our lives, each participant will present up to three photos taken that week of anything that has caught their eye. All photos will be welcome; just bring your story. The photos will be emailed in large format to be shown on a TV.

Monday, 2 pm, Apr 15, 29; May 20; Jun 3

Leader Gay Bruveris

Members \$10

Host Gay Bruveris

Non-Members \$20

Place Pasadena

212 Armchair Travel: Cuba

Cuba is a land of lively music and dance, colorful buildings and a vibrant cultural history. Adrienne's slide show will highlight her travels on a cultural arts tour in this eclectic country filled with classic cars, some crumbling and some beautifully restored buildings, and lots of fun and interesting adventures along the way. Come meet musicians, dancers, preschoolers, seniors, artists and entrepreneurs.

Tuesday, 7 pm, Apr 16

Leader Adrienne Bass

Members \$5

Host Marilynne Wilander

Non-Members \$10

Place Arcadia

213 Play Reading: *Blithe Spirit* by Noel Coward

Have you ever wanted to act, direct or be involved in putting on a play? Here's your chance. We will be doing a table reading (with scripts) of the fun and wacky play "Blithe Spirit" by Noel Coward. "Blithe Spirit" is the story of a spiritual medium who holds a seance for a writer suffering from writer's block, but when she accidentally summons his deceased first wife, the craziness and mayhem begin. There will be roles for everyone (acting, directing, props, etc.). Come join the fun !!!

Saturday, 4 pm, Apr 27; May 4

Leader Adrienne Bass & Patty Brugman

Members \$10

Host Patti Brugman

Non-Members \$20

Place Pasadena

214 *The Alice Network* by Kate Quinn

In this enthralling novel from New York Times bestselling author Kate Quinn, two women, a female spy recruited to the real-life Alice Network in France during World War I and an unconventional American socialite searching for her cousin in 1947, are brought together in a mesmerizing story of courage and redemption. ISBN-13: 978-0062654199

Wednesday, 2 pm, May 1, 8, 15, 22, 29

Leader Lisa Darling

Members \$22

Host Lisa Darling

Non-Members \$32

Place Alhambra

215 Movie - *Kramer vs. Kramer* (1979)

Kramer vs. Kramer is a compelling drama directed by Robert Benton, navigating the complexities of family dynamics. Dustin Hoffman and Meryl Streep deliver powerful performances as Ted and Joanna Kramer, exploring the emotional aftermath of divorce and the evolution of gender roles. The film, which won multiple Academy Awards including Best Picture, skillfully delves into the challenges of single parenthood, societal expectations, and personal growth, leaving a lasting impact with its poignant storytelling and superb acting. Participants are to watch the movie in advance.

Tuesday, 10:30 am, May 7

Leader Coralie Whitcomb

Members \$5

Zoom

Non-Members \$10

216 *The Last Politician: Inside Joe Biden's White House and the Struggle for America's Future* by Franklin Foer

On January 20, 2021, standing at the site where, only two weeks earlier, police officers had confronted right-wing paramilitaries, Joe Biden took his oath of office. Despite an unprecedented set of crises, including Covid-19, an impending financial crisis, and the barest of majorities in the Senate, Joe Biden set out to transform the nation instead of playing defense. Franklin Foer tells the insider story of the first two years of the Biden presidency and provides a portrait of a president at a time when democracy itself seemed imperiled. ISBN-13: 978-1101981146

Tuesday, 2 pm, May 7, 14, 21, 28

Leader Carla Barnes

Members \$30

Host Fran Blackwell

Non-Members \$40

Place Pasadena

217 *Hero of the Empire* by Candice Millard

Hero of the Empire by Candice Millard is a gripping historical narrative that chronicles the early life of Winston Churchill during the Boer War. Millard vividly captures Churchill's daring escape from a Boer prisoner-of-war camp, showcasing his resilience and audacity. Against the backdrop of South Africa's harsh terrain, Churchill's strategic brilliance and charisma come to the fore. The book offers a riveting account of this pivotal episode, illustrating Churchill's journey from capture to heroism. Millard's narrative prowess combines meticulous research with a compelling storytelling style, delivering an engaging biography that unveils the indomitable spirit of one of history's most influential leaders. ISBN-13: 978-0307948786

Friday, 2 pm, May 17, 24, 31

Leader Steve Crane

Members \$28

Zoom

Non-Members \$38

218 Movie - *Malcolm X* (1992)

Malcolm X, directed by Spike Lee, is a riveting biopic illuminating the transformative journey of civil rights leader Malcolm X. Denzel Washington's stellar portrayal captures Malcolm Little's evolution from a troubled youth to an influential advocate for black empowerment. The film chronicles his political awakening, conversion to Islam, and pivotal role in the Nation of Islam. A powerful exploration of identity, activism, and justice, "Malcolm X" stands as an inspiring testament to one man's quest for truth amid systemic racism. Participants are to watch the movie in advance.

Wednesday, 12 noon, May 22

Leader Marjorie Levin

Zoom

Members \$5

Non-Members \$10

219 Student Loan Repayment: What's Fair and Why?

Student loan repayment fairness encompasses various perspectives, including ability to pay, debt amount, and education value. Fair policies could include income-driven repayment plans, public service loan forgiveness, teacher loan forgiveness, Perkins loan cancellation, and student loan forgiveness for disabled borrowers. Interest rate reduction, repayment period extension, and increased financial assistance to students could further enhance fairness. The goal is to make repayment affordable and sustainable for all borrowers.

Thursday, 10 am, May 23

Leader Bhargav Oza

Zoom

Members FREE

Non-Members FREE

220 "The Other One" by Tessa Hadley

In the first few sentences of *The Other One* by Tessa Hadley (New Yorker 4/13/2020), we learn that our protagonist Heloise, when she is in her early 40s, would first learn that when her father died in a car crash in France when she was 12 he was supposed to have been at a conference in Germany. Not only had he not even bothered to sign up for that conference, but there were two women in the car with him, one of whom was his mistress. During the past two decades Hadley has contributed more short stories to the New Yorker than any other author. We will explore both Hadley's writing style and how she develops a story focusing on an incident from the past which continues to haunt the lives of those in the present.

Tuesday, 12 noon, May 28

Leader Charles Schufreider

Zoom

Members \$5

Non-Members \$10

221 *The Lost City of Z* by David Grann

Journalist David Grann, acclaimed author of *Killers of the Flower Moon: The Osage Murders and the Birth of the FBI*, unravels another true story, *The Lost City of Z*. In 1925 Colonel Percy Fawcett vanished into the uncharted depths of the Amazon, driven by the whisper of a legendary lost city named Z. Weaving history and personal narrative, Grann breathes life into Fawcett's daring expeditions, the sacrifices of his family, and the allure of the unknown. More than an adventure, this book delves into themes of exploration, obsession and the enigma of the Amazon. Delve into the jungle's secrets and grapple with the enduring questions: Did Z ever exist? Prepare to be captivated by the thrill of the hunt and the mystery that lingers within the rainforest's heart. ISBN-13: 978-1400078455

Tuesday, 1 pm, June 4, 11, 18, 25

Leader Bonnie Brown

Members \$25

Non-Members \$35

Place Garfield Park, South Pasadena

222 Armchair Travel: Iceland

Visiting Iceland is an exciting event in a country filled with many geological wonders. It's known as the Land of Fire and Ice because it's covered with volcanoes and glaciers. Come see Adrienne's slide show documenting her adventures on her tour showcasing this land of over 400 waterfalls, beautiful green grasslands, natural geothermal hot springs, mountain ranges, rugged coastlines, and other spectacular sights. Presented in collaboration with the Pasadena AAUW, this event is also open to Villa Gardens' residents. Note that for non-residents, Villa Gardens policy requires prior registration. **No walk-ins are permitted.**

Wednesday, 7 pm, Jun 5

Leader Adrienne Bass

Host Carolyn Harris

Place Villa Gardens, Pasadena

Members FREE

Non-Members FREE

223 *Empress of the Nile: The Daredevil Archaeologist Who Saved Egypt's Ancient Temples from Destruction* by Lynne Olson

This is the story of Christiane Desroches-Noblecourt, both a spy for the Allies in WWII and a French archeologist with the moxie to take on the Egyptians, the Americans and the French to save historic Egyptian temples that were threatened by flooding caused by the 1960 construction of the Aswan High Dam. In addition to moving the threatened monuments to higher ground she convinced the Egyptians to allow surveys and excavations of Nubian land sites that would not be moved. ISBN-13: 978-0525509479

Thursday, 2 pm, Jun 6, 13, 20, 27

Leader Bob Diller

Host Gaye Bruveris

Place Pasadena

Members \$36

Non-Members \$46

224 Movie - *One Child Nation* (2019)

One Child Nation is a poignant documentary uncovering the profound impact of China's one-child policy. Directors Nanfu Wang and Jialing Zhang skillfully delve into the policy's devastating consequences, from forced sterilizations to the trafficking of abandoned infants. Through intimate interviews and personal narratives, the film reveals the human toll of government control, sparking reflection on ethics, reproductive rights, and the enduring effects of a controversial population control strategy. *One Child Nation* is a compelling exploration of the intersection between state power, human rights, and individual lives. Participants are to watch the movie in advance.

Monday, 12 noon, Jun 10

Leader Chuck Jaffee

Zoom

Members \$5

Non-Members \$10

225 *Democracy Awakening: Notes on the State of America* by Heather Cox Richardson

In *Democracy Awakening*, Heather Cox Richardson crafts a compelling and original narrative, explaining how, over the decades, a small group of wealthy people have made war on American ideals. By weaponizing language and promoting false history, they've led us into authoritarianism, creating a disaffected population and then promising to recreate an imagined past where those people could feel important again. She argues that taking our country back starts by remembering the elements of our nation's true history that marginalized Americans have always upheld. Many books tell us what has happened over the last five years. *Democracy Awakening* explains how we got to this inflection point, what our history really tells us about ourselves, and what the future of democracy can be. ISBN-13: 978-0593652961

Tuesday, 10 am, Jun 11, 18, 25

Leader Donna Jaffee

Host Donna Jaffee

Place Pasadena

Members \$36

Non-Members \$46

226 Who Is Likely To Be Our Next President?

Although the parties have yet to nominate their candidates, the country anticipates a rematch of the 2020 race between Joe Biden and Donald Trump. Who or what can have enough impact to determine the outcome?

Monday, 12 noon, Jun 24

Leader Carla Barnes

Zoom

Members \$5

Non-Members \$10

SAFARIS

S05 Olvera Street, including Museum of Justice

Olvera Street, in an area called La Plaza, is a historic pedestrian street in El Pueblo de Los Angeles, the historic center of Los Angeles. Free tours are available for the Avila Adobe, a historic home on the street. There are many shops, restaurants, and historic buildings in the area, so this will be a walking experience. A free tour of the Museum of Social Justice, located in the basement of La Plaza United Methodist Church, will be available. A caveat: there is no elevator to the museum – the only access is a narrow set of stairs with handrails. After browsing the area, we can select a local eating place. One suggestion is La Luz del Dia, where fresh tortillas are made on the spot.

Thursday, 10 am, May 16

Leader Sara Munshin

Members \$10

Non-Members \$15

Place Los Angeles

S06 Mandir - Hindu Temple, Chino Hills

Immerse yourself in cultural wonder at the BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir in Chino Hills. Marvel at the architectural masterpiece, discover Hindu traditions, and find peace in the tranquil atmosphere. Open to all, the Mandir offers educational tours, community events, and a respectful space for reflection. The two-hour tour ends with a no-host lunch in the cafeteria. Dress code: long skirts or pants. No shoes and no photos are allowed in the Mandir, so make sure to wear comfortable socks. Leave Pasadena at 9:30 am to arrive around 10:30 am. Return at 2:00 pm, arriving back in Pasadena by 3:00 pm. Carpooling is recommended.

Saturday, 9:30 am to 3 pm, May 18

Leader Esma Ali

Members \$10

Non-Members \$15

Place Chino Hills

Option to purchase books yourself

The Board has decided that all books purchased for our groups will be sent directly from Amazon to your homes. However, if you wish to support another bookseller by purchasing your books there, the cost of any group will be \$10 for members and \$20 for non-members (unless there is a ticket or other expense involved). We have included the ISBN in our group descriptions to ensure that you purchase the correct edition of the book.

In our program brochure, PALAC publishes the cost of each discussion group. This includes the price of the book, convenient delivery to your home, and office overhead. If you choose to buy your own book rather than using the office's book delivery system, we request that you follow these simple steps:

- When filling out your registration form, adjust the price to \$10 for members or \$20 for non-members.
- When completing your registration form, check the option that says "I will be responsible for buying my own books."
- Jot a note to yourself to remind yourself to order or buy the book. Be sure to order your book early to give the bookstore or online service time to check availability!
- Keep the ISBN in the brochure handy when ordering online or shopping at a store. This ensures you will have the same edition of the book as the rest of the group.

(Note: Buying your own book may end up costing you more than if the office orders the book for you.)