



# PHI BETA KAPPA

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION  
THE GAMMA ASSOCIATION OF CALIFORNIA  
Association Chartered June 14, 1946

**June 2021**

Go to the Mobile copy <https://pbknca.com/Newsletter/>

## **Twelve Scholars and Four Teachers Honored. May, 2021 Awardees have made Videos of their “Annual Meeting Talks”**

The videos are now available on our website. Go to [pbknca.com/](https://pbknca.com/), then use the menu bar at the top, click on Scholarship, or Teaching. There are links by most awardees that go to the YouTube videos.

### **From the President**



As I begin my twelfth year as President of Phi Beta Kappa – Northern California Association, I thank the membership for its confidence in me. I have enjoyed serving  $\Phi$ BKNCA these past terms and look forward to an equally pleasant experience in 2021-22.

Our Board this coming year consists entirely of returning officers and chairs. I am pleased that all were willing to “re-up” for another term. These people are a delightful group with whom to associate and they make my job very easy, as they do all the work! The 2021-22 Nominating Committee consists of six members: Judy Hardardt– Chair, Elizabeth Archambeault, Gerald Richards, Maria Norall<sup>SEP</sup>, Megan Carlucci, Megan Winkelman, and O’Neil Dillon. If you should feel a yen to participate in the governance of  $\Phi$ BKNCA, please contact one of these people to discuss the various openings we may have in the future.

I thank our Program Chair, O’Neil Dillon, for creating “no contact” programs for us during this COVID-19 pandemic. He is getting us involved in Zoom - helping members set up book clubs and presenting talks and honest information about the pandemic.

This spring we awarded \$7500 scholarships to twelve graduate students from four universities in our region. We also gave four Teaching Excellence Awards to faculty members from two different campuses; these professors were nominated by former students for their outstanding abilities. It is not too early to nominate a teacher who had a great impact on your life for the 2022 TE Award; see the Teaching Excellence Awards section on page two.

Unfortunately, the pandemic forced us again to cancel our Annual Awards Luncheon, but Communications Officer Ray Hendess has reached out to the awardees, asking them to create videos in lieu of their talks at the luncheon. These videos are available on the Scholarship and Teaching Excellence pages of our website <https://www.pbknca.com>.

Funds for our scholarships and awards come from your membership fees and gifts (all fully tax-deductible), also from any contribution for our online events. We thank you.

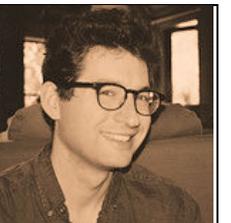
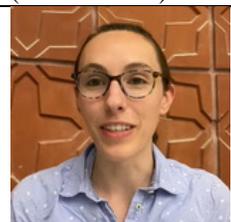
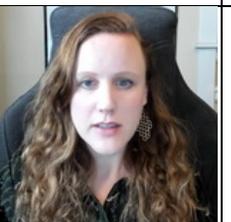
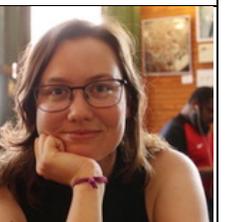
We also plan to resume our Presidents’ Day weekend event at Asilomar in 2022. Deirdre Frontczak and her team are working diligently to provide us with another great set of speakers and social events; put 18-21 February 2022 on your calendars NOW! (Further information will be upcoming.)

*Mary Turner Gilliland, President 2011-21*

<b>Click links to navigate</b>	
Book Clubs	3
Events	3
$\Phi$ BKNCA Board	5
President’s Letter	1
Scholarship awardees	2
Teaching Excellence	2

## Scholarship Awards 2021

In fulfillment of its mission to encourage scholarship and research, the Phi Beta Kappa Northern California Association has honored the following outstanding Phi Beta Kappa graduate students with \$7,500 scholarship awards to assist them in completing their educational objectives:

					
Jerika Barron, UC San Francisco, Biomedical Sciences (Norall award)	Gil Breger, UC Berkeley, Near Eastern Studies	Tal (Tali) Caspi, UC Davis, Ecology	Lewis Esposito, Stanford, Linguistics (Gilliland award)	Iris Holzer, UC Davis, Soils and Biogeochemistry	Jonathan Lear, UC Berkeley, History
					
Claire Magnani, UC Berkeley, Chemistry (Hendess award)	Julia Melin, Stanford, Sociology	Joseph Passman, UC Berkeley, History (Hardardt award)	Ashley Perez, UC San Francisco, Sociology	Kathryn Pribble, UC Berkeley, Slavic Languages and Literature	Nina Venuti, UC Davis, Ecology (Reed award)

Scholarship Committee: Jeff Fenton, Lynne Fovinci, Judith Hardardt, Jean James, Joanne Sandstrom(Chair)

## Teaching Excellence Awards 2021

Keenly aware of the great worth of learning and of the extraordinary gifts, diligence, and amplitude of spirit that mark the best in teaching, the Phi Beta Kappa Northern California Association takes pleasure in conferring its 2021 Teaching Excellence Awards upon these distinguished teachers:

			
David Cohen, Ph.D., Dept. of Classics, Director of the Center for Human Rights and International Justice, Stanford University	Paul Graham Fisher M.D., Dept. of Neurology and Neurological Sciences, Chief of the Division of Child Neurology, Stanford University	Courtney Lehmann, Ph.D., Dept. of English, Director of the Powell Scholars Program, University of the Pacific (Hasenkamp award)	William Swagerty, Ph.D., Dept. of History, Director of the John Muir Center, University of the Pacific

Teaching Excellence Committee: Melisa Lasell, Andrea Braga, Melissa Stevens (Chair)

## **Nominations for the Teaching Excellence Award for spring 2022 are being accepted now**

Please see <https://www.pbknca.com/teaching/> for more information.

## **Upcoming Events**

### **ΦBKNCA Book Club Panel**

The four Co-leaders of our two book clubs will present an open discussion about their book club experience, and will be available to answer questions from ΦBKNCA members who may be considering becoming members. See below.

Date: TBD. Watch your email or the website [www.pbknca.com](http://www.pbknca.com)

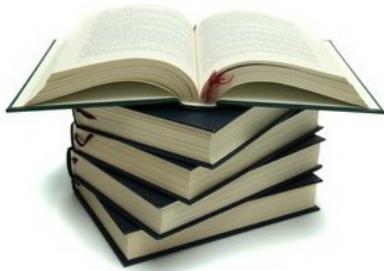
### **Mondavi Winery wine tasting**

A trip to the Mondavi Winery in Napa Valley for wine tasting and possibly lunch, when safe to do so and compliant with CDC guidelines for social gatherings.

Date: TBD. Watch your email or the website [www.pbknca.com](http://www.pbknca.com)

## **PBKNCA Book Club Reports (new members welcome)**

### **Book Club #1 Jean James and Eoin Lyons. Co-Leaders**



What do Phi Betes do when they are confined to home during a pandemic? Read! At the instigation of our First Vice President, O’Neil Dillon, they also form book clubs. Last May O’Neil recruited a recent graduate, Eoin Lyons, to handle the technical issues of electronic communication and Zoom. Jean agreed to run the meetings. And O’Neil and Ray, our communications director, put out the word that we were looking for members. Since we had no guidelines besides our previous experiences with other book clubs, we felt free to make up the rules as we went.

We had our first virtual meeting last July and have been meeting every six weeks or so since then. Although we have fourteen “members” on our email list, we have had only six faithful attendees. Needless to say, we all have different backgrounds, interests, and tastes in literature, which lead to lively discussions. Luckily, we have two recent graduates who have joined us “gray hairs”, adding fresh perspectives.

We don’t have any rules regarding the book discussions. Usually, someone says something like, “Well, what did you think?” And then the talk begins. As everyone approaches literature with a different background, it is interesting to learn what various readers focus on and remember. Because of book length, topic interest, and time constraints, some members read the whole book; some don’t. There is no pressure either way.

As for choosing books, initially we listened to attendees’ suggestions at the meeting and came to a consensus for the next selection. Now Eoin sends an email to remind us to send recommendations to him before the meeting. That way we have time to do our research, both on topic and availability. We try to choose books that are readily available and cheap, at the library or online. Members sometimes recommend books that they have read already and want to revisit. Other times, the books are new to all of us.

Since July we have read the following:

*Vanity Fair*

*The Vanishing Half*

*Restless*

Quite a variety, as you can see. The current selection for our June meeting is *Desert Queen: The Extraordinary Life of Gertrude Bell*.

So, although the pandemic is waning, our book club is surviving the virus.

*Tuesdays with Morrie*

*The Master and Margarita*

*I, Eliza Hamilton*

## Book Club #2 Joanne Sandstrom and Libby Tyler, Co-Leaders



Phi Betes know a lot, but did you ever wonder

- how the scrawny mammal *Homo sapiens* came to be at the top of the food chain? We create fiction. See *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind*, by Yuval Noah Harari.
- why the right to pursue happiness--rather than, say, wealth or education or godliness--is declared in the *Declaration of Independence*? Thomas Jefferson read Lucretius's *De rerum natura*, the last copy of which was found by a 15th-century papal emissary. See *The Swerve: How the World Became Modern*.
- what is happening in the living world underground? See *The Overstory*, by Richard Powers.
- what is happening in the dead world underground? See *Underland*, by Robert MacFarlane.

These are just some of the books our coterie read this year. As a veteran of numerous book groups over the years--one ongoing for more than half a century--I declare this the best.

First, as co-chair of this ΦBKNCA book group, I have to thank O'Neil Dillon for suggesting that we put together these groups, and give all credit to the other co-chair, Libby Tyler. She has done *everything* to get the group up and running. Those of us who signed up suggested titles. Libby put the suggestions together, gathered the votes, proposed the slate, organized the Doodle polls to select dates for the discussions, set up the Zoom meetings .... We would not have this group had it not been for her work.

We didn't act on any preconceived ideas when we selected the books; that is, no "You must have read the book you suggest"; "We should read only fiction"; "We should read only nonfiction"; "We should read the classics". When Libby got the list together, several of us (myself included) voiced skepticism about some titles (and some skepticism, I'm pretty sure, was unvoiced). But we persevered. We hoped that each of us would read every book, but it isn't a requirement. We hoped that everyone would be able to attend each meeting, but that's not been possible. Schedules vary. We meet on the day and at the time when the most people are available. We try to do this monthly, but sometimes--especially if the book is a long one--we stretch it out to five or six weeks.

Competing commitments made one early participant drop out. New people have joined. You're welcome.

Other books read or being considered-

*The Weight of Ink*

*How to be an Antiracist*

*The Night Watchman*

*The Convert*

*A Long Petal of the Sea*

*The Iliad*

**ΦBK Board, July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022**

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The editor thanks Dr Larry Lerner for proofing this newsletter.



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