

Emeriti Profile- Arnie Zimbelman

May 30, 2012, marked twenty years since my retirement from the faculty at Cosumnes River College. I understand that this makes me one of the "longest retired" of the current CRC Emeriti. And since I was the lone faculty retiree in 1992, I also became the sole recipient of a special "CRC Medallion," presented to me by then-President Marc Hall at commencement exercises that year.

My journey to Cosumnes River College came by way of Sacramento City College, where I had become a full-time history instructor after several years of teaching in their evening program, while still serving as Social Science Department Chair at Elk Grove High School. But CRC had always remained my ultimate goal, ever since we had learned of its proposed construction. We watched eagerly as the new campus developed. Finally the long-anticipated day arrived, and in the fall of 1970 I was ready to assume my duties.

Unfortunately, not everything on the new campus was ready for *us*. For several weeks, some of my classes were held in temporary trailers ~ understandably, a less-than-ideal situation. Ultimately we moved to classrooms on the first floor of the current Library Building, with faculty offices for both Social Science and English instructors (we were not allowed to call ourselves "professors" then) housed on the floor above. Several years later, when our new Humanities/Social Science Building was constructed, some of my classes met in what we dubbed "The Fishbowl" (the all-glass facility that later became the College Career Center). That facility was always a real favorite; it seemed like the "center of our little world" ~ very appropriate, with currents of activity swirling all around us.

What a host of changes has taken place since those exciting opening days at CRC! The new college had no cafeteria, so we mostly had to brown-bag it for lunch. One of the highlights of each year came when Division Chairman John Diestel treated the entire Social Studies Division, their "significant others," plus members of the English Department to formal dinners at "Aldo's," or some other fine Sacramento restaurant. A few other random recollections: The decorative fountain in the area next to the Library, set in cobblestones brought from San Francisco, never did work properly. That area has since morphed into a much more useable Quad. Even the name of our athletic teams ~ Coach Del Bandy's beloved "Chiefs" (Del was an avid Kansas City fan) ~ has since been changed to the more appropriate "Hawks".

Perhaps I should include a bit of information about the original architectural concept for the CRC campus, as the architect explained it to us. He indicated that our rather isolated campus had been purposely designed to reflect its rural setting. Berms surrounding the college perimeter were left covered with natural grasses, serving as "homes" for the jack rabbits and owls that often greeted faculty and students who arrived on campus early. Closer to the Library, which the architect foresaw as the campus "center" (we called it the "Acropolis"), lawns and trees would indicate movement toward a more urban and civilized core.

A few other "early CRC" notes: When the college first opened in the fall of 1970, many faculty members had no concept of how to properly pronounce the name of their new work-place. Therefore, at one of our first faculty meetings our very proper English instructor, Margaret Harrison, had to clarify both the origin and correct pronunciation of

"Cosumnes." Still, when we all met at a local hotel restaurant a few weeks later, we were greeted by a friendly sign: "Welcome, Consumer College".

We also had to establish some type of governance for the new institution. Accordingly, our Political Science instructor, John Diestel, formulated a Faculty Constitution, and Tony Rosales from the Science Department was elected first Faculty Senate President, with me as his Vice President. After Tony's term, I followed as Faculty Senate President, with Dick Beymer as Vice President. Next I headed the District Faculty Senate Council, which encompassed the (then) three Los Rios Colleges and met regularly with the District Superintendent to discuss mutual problems and goals.

I thoroughly enjoyed my total teaching time at CRC, and I have also enjoyed my twenty years of retirement since. There was never any need for a period of "adjustment." My wife Iris and I had begun traveling abroad many years before (first, to celebrate our 25th Wedding Anniversary, a trip to Greece, the Greek Islands, and Egypt), and we've continued our travels ~ especially to Western Europe, but also to Canada and much of the United States. In fact, one of the true "perks" of my years at CRC was being part of the District's first "London Semester". Along with instructors from City College and ARC, we taught our students in London for an entire semester ~ particularly gratifying to a history teacher, as we visited the actual sites we had discussed earlier in class. The semester also provided opportunities to see many of London's outstanding theater productions, as well as to visit Scotland, Ireland, and Belgium. As we get older, however, cruises (particularly European river cruises) have become more attractive to us.

Some other activities since retirement: I've continued some involvement with the Strauss Festival of Elk Grove ~ the elegant music and dance performances held each summer in Elk Grove Park. The Festival was the "brain-child" of Iris following one of our trips to Austria, and will be celebrating twenty-five years of productions this July. For these efforts, a Park on Big Horn Boulevard was named for us by the Elk Grove Community Services District.

I've also managed to continue expressing my appreciation of history by writing three historical novels (all available in the CRC Library): "Recompense: Return to Oberammergau," centered around the Passion Play held in Germany every ten years; "Exile from Jamestown," a look at the founding of our first permanent American colony; and "Betrayal at Popham," dealing with a little-known facet of our early history that culminated in the "Lost Colony of Maine."

In addition, until recently I served as a Trustee of the Elk Grove-Cosumnes Cemetery District, helping to oversee and restore six local historic cemeteries. And both Iris and I remain active members of the "Rhoads School Board," whose purpose is to enable local third and fourth graders to experience a day in a one-room school, just as children did in the 1890's.