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RAPS Sheet: Monthly Newsletter

Retirement Association of Portland State  
(RAPS)

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12-2007

## RAPS Sheet, December 2007

Retirement Association of Portland State

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## Retirement Association of Portland State

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Office hours:

Tuesdays and Thursdays,  
8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

## Officers

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*President*

**Marjorie Terdal**  
*President-elect / Program Chair*

**Bruce Stern**  
*Past President / Membership Chair*

**Robert Vogelsang**  
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**Amy Valdez**  
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## Into the maw of Ape Cave

Mount St. Helens was the site of the RAPS hiking group's October trek into the wild. Bob Tufts, RAPS president, surveys the scenery at the upper entrance to Ape Cave. Read all about it on page 3.

## Join your friends at RAPS' holiday dinner

Get into the holiday spirit at the RAPS Annual Holiday Dinner on Tuesday, Dec. 18, from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m., at the Multnomah Athletic Club, 1849 SW Salmon Street. (And, yes, the day of the dinner is Tuesday, not Thursday, as the mailed invitation indicated in error.)

Come at 6:00 p.m. for conversation, appetizers, and no-host wine, beer, and soda. Dinner at 7:00 p.m. includes salad, a choice of three entrees (Chicken Marsala, Pork Tenderloin, or Vegetarian), and an elegant dessert with coffee or tea. Entertainment at 8:00 p.m. features eight music students from Portland State's Music Department—a clarinet ensemble from Prof. Barbara Heilmair's class and a vocal ensemble. They will present a variety of numbers, including holiday favorites. There may even be a chance for a sing-along.

The cost for all this is \$35 per person—a bargain, since RAPS is subsidizing a portion of the dinner cost. Please send your reservations, with entrée choice and checks, to the RAPS office by Dec. 10. Make your check payable to PSU Foundation and mail it to RAPS, Portland State University, Simon Benson House, P.O. Box 751, Portland, OR 97207.

Parking is available in the MAC parking garage across SW Salmon Street from the main entrance. In case of congestion in the parking structure, you may be directed to nearby overflow parking facilities. MAX stops right in front and is a good alternative to driving. Upon entering the lobby, be sure to check in at the main desk. Then take the stairs or elevator up to the Lownsdale Room on the second floor.

## RAPS Holiday Dinner

Tuesday, Dec. 18  
Multnomah Athletic Club  
1849 SW SALMON STREET

## President's Message

**O**ur annual Holiday Dinner event takes place at the MAC club on Tuesday, Dec. 18th. I hope I'll see many of you there. Our flyer had the weekday in error, and I regret that oversight by our intrepid proofreading team (which included me). I am reminded of the *Pogo* comic strip, wherein Walt Kelly's storytelling often lamented that Friday the thirteenth didn't always occur on a Friday. (And so, Dec. 18 is not a Thursday.)

A longstanding PSU benefit for RAPS members has been the annual distribution of the Campus Directory. We are informed that the directory will no longer be printed. So the RAPS Board and I encourage you to participate in the new RAPS Membership Directory. A second letter will come to you concerning this matter. Please respond and participate.

Our monthly speaker program in October had Kilong Ung give an emotional chronicle of his journey from the Cambodian killing fields to Reed College to Portland's Rosaria. In November we learned from Prof. Pah Chen how a hydrogen economy might not be just a science fiction alternative to humanity's petroleum-based lifestyle. Our thanks to Marge Terdal in her role as your RAPS Program chair.

I wish to introduce one of your new at-large RAPS Board members, Charlene Levesque. She retired as PSU's experienced and respected manager of Campus Event Scheduling this year and joined our board. Her life story begins in pre-World War II Chicago, and includes an eight-grade country schoolhouse, marriage and family, moving to and raising sheep in Eugene, and publishing the *Black Sheep Newsletter*.

Prof. Johanna Brenner's Returning Women's Studies course in the mid-1980s "changed her life." Hired in 1994, Charlene quickly became PSU's Campus Events scheduler, a responsibility that she handled in the most professional manner—and I speak from the position of registrar, which I held. Charlene comes to serve RAPS while dealing with personal issues that have brought the support of PSU women. In addition to her service to RAPS, Charlene volunteers in the PSU community, serving on the Walk of the Heroines board, the MLK Celebration committee, and the African American Visual Arts committee, among others.

Happy holidays!

—Bob Tufts

## Hydrogen economy: Not hype, but a lot of hurdles ahead

A world fueled by hydrogen holds some absolutely enticing promises—energy independence, an improved environment, and enhanced human health.

It's just that the road to that world has a few potholes, as Pah Chen, professor emeritus of mechanical engineering, explained last month during the second edition of RAPS 2007-08 Speakers Series. His talk was titled "Heading toward a Hydrogen Economy: Real or Hype?"



The answer is: It certainly isn't hype, but it's a long way from real.

In a hydrogen economy, society's energy needs—for the car you drive or the house you heat—is derived from hydrogen. The benefits are clear and almost enchanting: carbon-based fossil fuels would be eliminated, and with them those nasty greenhouse gases and other pollutants. The crushing problem of dwindling petroleum supplies would vanish. And there's plenty of hydrogen to go around; it's bonded to water

in every drop on the planet.

And that's one of the central problems; hydrogen is always bonded to something else, and breaking that bond is expensive. Today, said Chen, most hydrogen is produced using fossil fuels—gas, oil, and coal—the very fuels the hydrogen economy would eliminate. The "holy grail" of hydrogen production, he explained, is electrolysis using hydropower, nuclear power, wind turbines, or solar power. At this point, however, those methods are not economically feasible.

So what would make a hydrogen economy feasible? Higher oil prices, lower air quality, and government regulation. If government demands it, said Chen, the hydrogen economy would become much closer to reality.

Although the hydrogen economy may sound like fantasy, several European nations, which are looking seriously at hydrogen, would disagree. So would energy-challenged Japan, which has drawn a "road map" to a hydrogen economy.

## RAPS club reports

### Book Club: Doig's 'The Whistling Season'

The RAPS Book Group will not meet in December, but will begin its 2008 meetings on Tuesday, Jan. 15, at the home of Prue Douglas in Terwilliger Plaza, 2545 SW Terwilliger Blvd., Portland. Contact her at 503-299-4928 to RSVP and for directions. We will discuss *The Whistling Season*, by Ivan Doig, a Seattleite and author of several fiction and nonfiction books who focuses on small-town, early 1900s in the American West. *The Whistling Season* is described on the jacket as follows:

"Can't cook but doesn't bite." So begins the newspaper ad offering the services of an A-1 housekeeper, sound morals, exceptional disposition that draws the hungry attention of widower Oliver Milliron in the fall of 1909. And so begins the unforgettable season that deposits the noncooking, nonbiting, ever-whistling Rose Llewellyn and her font-of-knowledge brother, Morris Morgan, in Marias Coulee along with a stampede of homesteaders drawn by the promise of the Big Ditch—a gargantuan irrigation project intended to make the Montana prairie bloom. When the schoolmarm runs off with an itinerant preacher, Morris is pressed into service, setting the stage for the several kinds of education—none of them of the textbook variety—Morris and Rose will bring to Oliver, his three sons, and the rambunctious students in the region's one-room schoolhouse.

For February, we will read *The Lemon Tree* by Sandy Tolan.

Have a wonderful holiday season and join us in 2008! —*Mary Brannan*

### Bridge Group bids Dec. 11

The RAPS Bridge Group will meet 1:00 p.m., Tuesday, Dec. 11, at Willamette View. For details or information about the group, please call me at 503-292-0838 or email [colinkeld@gmail.com](mailto:colinkeld@gmail.com). If you would like to play, please let me know as soon as you can and no later than Friday, Dec. 7. —*Colin Dunkeld*

### Hikers: Snowshoeing, anyone?

There will be no December hike due to the holidays. In January we will hike locally. There will be more details in the January RAPS Sheet.

We have had some hikers ask about a snowshoe hike. If others are interested in a snowshoe hike, I will schedule an additional winter hike. Please let me know if you are interested in snowshoeing. Send your comments to [larry\\_sawyer@comcast.net](mailto:larry_sawyer@comcast.net) or 503-771-1616.

The November hike, held just after Thanksgiving, was on the Springwater Corridor between Sellwood and SE 82nd. There were a total of 12 people on the hike, the largest group ever to participate in a RAPS hike. (Maybe we should always hike after a holiday.) Nine of us had lunch at the Oaks Bottom Pub.

The October hike was to Ape Cave on Mount St. Helens. Geology professor Scott Burns took a group to the cave a week earlier in rainy weather, and he told me it rained harder in the cave than outside the cave. However, we arrived just behind three busloads of middle-school students, and we decided to hike on the surface up to the upper entrance. When we got back to the lower entrance and had our sack lunch, we had the cave to ourselves for a good half hour. Some of the hikers had never been in a lava tube before, and we walked a short distance down slope, the easy option, to give them a feel of a lava tube.

—*Larry Sawyer*

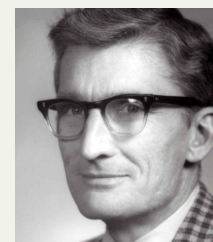
## PAST TENSE

### The School of Health & Human Performance

The School of Health and Human Performance's origins begin with Vanport Extension Center. In 1955, the Department of Health and Physical Education became part of the Division of Education.



Lee Ragsdale



Jack Schendel

In 1966, the new Health and Physical Education Building opened, and in 1977 the department gained school status under Dean Lee Ragsdale. After Ragsdale's retirement, Dean Jack Schendel continued to expand the school, and its name was changed in 1990 to the School of Health and Human Performance. In 1992 budget cuts forced closure of the school. The HPE building is now the Peter W. Stott Center. The school's retired faculty and staff have developed a historical display that will honor this great school.

*Past Tense* features glimpses into Portland State's past. To submit a story (or an idea for one), email the RAPS History Preservation Committee at [raps@pdx.edu](mailto:raps@pdx.edu).



# Horror story: A survivor recalls Cambodia's 'killing fields'

**K**ilong Ung began his remarkable story with plain, straightforward words: "A crime was committed 32 years ago. It seems like it was a long time ago, but nonetheless, I live through it every day."

For the next hour Ung related a harrowing account of the Cambodian killing fields to two dozen



RAPS members at the first lecture of the 2007-08 RAPS Speakers Series.

Ung is a survivor of the Khmer Rouge genocide in Cambodia.

About 2 million of Cambodia's 7.5 million people died during the 1975-79 genocide, which, when the percentage of the population murdered is considered, makes the communist Khmer Rouge regime among the most lethal in history.

Today Ung is a software engineer with degrees from Reed College and Bowling Green. He is a husband, a father of two, president of the Cambodian-American Community of Oregon, a Rotarian, a Royal Rosarian, and a member of several Portland-area committees and boards. But in 1975, as the Khmer Rouge closed in, he was a child of about 12 years (he's not sure when he was born) of a middle-class Cambodian family.

Ung told his story in clear, lightly accented English. During the hour-long talk he occasionally stopped for several seconds before continuing. "It's an emotional story," he explained, "and sometimes I have to pause. Two million people died. Many of the survivors are getting older, and they take their stories to the grave untold. I have self-nominated myself to be the voice of those 2 million and the

## Welcome the newest members of RAPS!

**Harold Cummings**, Senior Research Assistant/  
Project Coordinator, Regional Research Institute

**Roger Shope**, Wage Pool, School of Business Administration

**Stephen Fishler**, Program Technician 1, Business Affairs Office

**Gerald Hearn**, Office Specialist 2, Admissions and Registration

**Alan Zeiber**, Director of Weekend Undergraduate Program, School of Business Administration

## Mark your calendars

### January 17, 2008, 1:00 p.m.

Judy VanDyck, Director, Office of International Affairs  
"Internationalization of Portland State"

Room 338, Smith Memorial Student Union

### February 21, 2008, 1:00 p.m.

Guided tour of "The Dancer"

Special Exhibit at Portland Art Museum

### March 20, 2008

Potluck Lunch

Program to be announced

Room 333, Smith Memorial Student Union

### April 17, 2008

President's Luncheon

University Place, Columbia Falls Ballroom

survivors who cannot speak."

The day the Khmer Rouge swept into Ung's town in Battambang province, they quickly set the tone for their regime by shooting a man who, they claimed, had stolen a bicycle. "They said this would set an example," Ung said. "Cambodia was going to be the most moral country in the world, a utopia."

The next day the Khmer Rouge announced that they were evacuating the city. "We're going to give you one day," Ung recalled them saying. "And then we start shooting.' You can imagine the chaos."

The Khmer Rouge sent Ung to join a farm labor group. A food ration consisted of a bowl of rice porridge. "If you poured out the water, you're lucky if there are two tablespoons of rice," he said.

Executions and torture were commonplace and an important instrument of control. Watching Khmer Rouge guards slowly suffocate a man by tying a plastic bag around his head was "how they controlled you, by getting into your head," said Ung. "That's how you're broken."

By 1979, when the Vietnamese invaded Cambodia and loosened the Khmer Rouge's grip, Ung had lost 10 family members, including his parents, youngest sister, grandmother, two brothers-in-law, and a nephew, to starvation or execution. Still, he says, "there is nothing special about my story."

He eventually escaped with his sister and brother-in-law to a refugee camp in Thailand, and from there went in San Diego. He arrived in Portland in February 1980.