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RAPS Sheet, June 2012

Retirement Association of Portland State

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Retirement Association of Portland State

Portland State University
Post Office Box 751
Portland OR 97207-0751

Koinonia House, second floor
SW Montgomery at Broadway

Campus mail: RAPS
Web: www.pdx.edu/raps
Office hours: 9:00 am to 3:00 pm
Mondays and Thursdays

Officers

Joan Shireman
President

Dave Krug
President-elect / Program Chair

Clarence Hein
Past President

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Secretary

Robert Vogelsang
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Membership Chair

Office Manager

Sara Loreno
503/725-3447 / raps@pdx.edu



Ideal weather prevailed May 18 when nine RAPS hikers walked the Canyon Trail in Silver Falls State Park. Larry Sawyer took this shot of Lower North Falls. To see the photo in color, go to <http://www.pdx.edu/raps/raps-sheet-newsletter-archive> and click on the link for June.

◆ SAVE THE DATE ◆

RAPS's annual summer picnic
the event that traditionally kicks off the year

Thursday, Aug. 16, 4-7 pm
Willamette Park
SW Macadam and Nevada

Look for a special mailing this summer

President's Message

RAPS has had an eventful year. Thinking back, I realize how many accomplishments there have been. I'd like to share just a few of them.

Our scholarship is perhaps our major accomplishment. We awarded the first scholarship this year to Melissa Cannon, a student in Urban Studies whose field is gerontology. The Scholarship Committee, chaired by Bob Vogelsang, has become a standing committee. Denise Harrison, a graduate assistant from the University Advancement office, has assisted the committee in its work. We have been very grateful for this help. Wine raffles at our programs have kept us all aware of the scholarship and have generated a surprising amount of money.

Steve Brannan and Doug Swanson wrote (and RAPS published) a delightful little book, *Creating Portland State: 1946-1955*, with fascinating history and great pictures. CASE, the Council for Advancement and Support of Education, presented a Silver Award to Portland State University this year in recognition of the book's excellence.

A less visible but equally important accomplishment of the year is the completion of the membership database, which Larry Sawyer has worked on for two years. A tangible product of the new database will be an updated membership directory that should be ready soon. A new Membership Committee, chaired by Marge Terdal, has been busy. Letters welcoming a long list of new members are going out as I write, to be followed soon by a flock of letters about renewals.

My message is long, and I have mentioned only some of our accomplishments. I have not described the great programs—we even danced in May! We need to thank Vic Dahl for the sensitive remembrances he creates for the *RAPS Sheet*, and Dawn White for her work editing it. Robert Vogelsang is leading planning for our hosting of the Northwest Regional Retiree Associations in Higher Education conference. And we should note the continuing work of many members with varied tasks, as well as the continued activity of the book group, the hiking group, the writing group, and the bridge group. All these are vital to the health of RAPS.

As we move into the next year, we will welcome new board members Sue Poulsen as President-elect and Brian Lewis as Member-at-large. Susan Jackson will become our treasurer. Larry Sawyer will continue to work with us as a consultant on our new database, and Priscilla Blumel will continue as a Member-at-Large to complete Susan Jackson's term.

Yes, we have had some turmoil in the RAPS office this year but we have learned more about the systems needed to keep a complex organization working and have forged good partnerships in overcoming obstacles. We renewed our friendship with former Office Manager MiMi Bernal-Graves when she came back to help us. And I hope you have all met Sara Loreno, our new and very accomplished Office Manager. Despite the challenges, the work of RAPS went on. We had a very good year.

--Joan Shireman

Membership Committee gives progress report

The RAPS Membership Committee has worked with Human Resources to gather data on all faculty and staff who have retired since 2010. We have a list of over 100 names, all of whom will get letters this month about their one-year free membership in RAPS.

Larry Sawyer has recently updated the membership database, and the Membership Committee is sending out

notices to those whose membership expired over a year or more ago but who were not notified of that expiration.

The board has approved the following new schedule of membership fees: one year \$20, 5 years \$55, 10 years \$100 and lifetime \$200. Free membership is granted to anyone over 85, but those individuals must inform the office when they qualify.

--Marge Terdal



PAST TENSE

Making Music: The Music Department's Beginnings

Portland State's music program was created at Vanport Extension Center, relocated to the old Oregon Shipyards after the flood of 1948 destroyed Vanport City, the college's initial site. In these beginning years (1948-49), **Howard Backlund** was hired as a full-time instructor (two-thirds in Secretarial Science and one-third in Music) to help the Extension Center begin development of its music program. **Verne Wilson**, from the Portland Public School's Music Program, was also brought in part-time as an instructor.

Backlund and Wilson teamed as music instructors at Vanport College. Wilson, who focused on the Vanport Band,



Howard Backlund in 1962 later directed the Music Program for Portland Public Schools, served as adjunct faculty member in Music at Portland State, and contributed to the professional literature on the importance of music education in the school's curriculum.

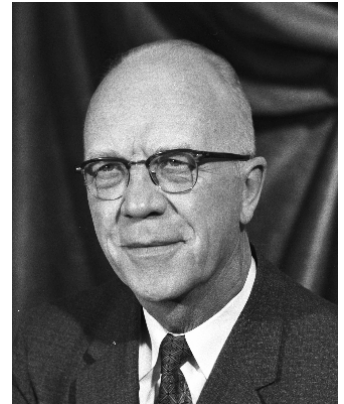
Backlund, who focused on the Vanport Choir, was instrumental in promoting music education for the Center throughout its early years, prior to the move to the Park Blocks in 1952 as Portland State Extension Center. Howard directed the 1949 Annual Spring Concert, which included a performance by the "Vanport College Choir, Band, Quartette, and Soloists."

Backlund went on to complete his Master's Degree and continued full-time at Portland State as Assistant Professor in Secretarial Science, his academic specialty.

John H. Stehn retired from the University of Oregon as band and concert director in 1950 and was recruited to head the Department of Music at Vanport College, which became Portland State College in 1955. Stehn immediately implemented plans to expand the Music Department, expending considerable time, energy, and skill to achieve this goal. At Portland State he was known for his equal treatment of men and women in music band education, for

his forceful but soft-spoken voice, and for his patience and efforts to help students succeed.

John was a leader and one of the guiding forces behind the band movement in the Pacific Northwest. He served as president of the Oregon Music Education Association (1951-52) and made numerous appearances in the region as guest conductor and judge of band festivals and contests.



John Stehn in 1957

I came to Oregon from Los Angeles in 1955 to play bassoon in what was then the Portland Symphony Orchestra. In 1959 I was hired by Stehn to conduct the band and teach conducting at Portland State College. As we had to wear many hats in those days, I also taught music theory and ear-training (solfeggio). Finally I got to add courses in my specialty, the music of Latin America.

These times were both challenging and rewarding for faculty and students who participated in and contributed to forming PSU's Music Department.

*--Gordon A. Solie, Professor Emeritus of Music,
with additional information contributed by Steve Brannan*

PAST TENSE features glimpses into Portland State's history. To submit a story (or an idea for one), email the RAPS History Preservation Committee at raps@pdx.edu.

RAPS Club Reports



Larry Sawyer captured this view behind North Falls when the RAPS hikers trekked in Silver Falls State Park May 18.

Bridge Group fans the deck June 12

The RAPS Bridge Group meets at 1:00pm Tuesday, June 12 at Friendly House, 1737 NW 26th Ave. For further information, call Colin Dunkeld, 503-292-0838. Please call no later than noon Friday, June 8. Newcomers are always welcome.

--Colin Dunkeld

RAPS Hikers head to the Gorge

Nine hikers walked the Canyon Trail May 18 in Silver Falls State Park from South Falls to North Falls. We welcomed new hikers Steve Brennan and Diane Sawyer and a grandson of the Terdals. Bob Lockerby also joined us.

We have moved the date of the Columbia Gorge June hike to Friday, June 15, to include Laureen Nussbaum, who will be visiting from Seattle. This hike will be up the Wahkeena Falls Trail and down the Multnomah Falls Trail. There is some elevation gain but the hike is not strenuous. We will have our sack lunch at Wahkeena Springs, a favorite spot of the late Rudi Nussbaum.

Meet at the SE corner of the Gateway Transit Center parking garage at 9:30 am Friday, June 15. Please confirm your participation to Larry Sawyer at 503-771-1616 or larry_sawyer@comcast.net.

--Larry Sawyer

Book Club reads 'Half the Sky'

The RAPS Book Club meets at 1:00 pm Tuesday, June 19 at the home of Maxine Thomas at 6535 SW Canyon Court in Portland. Contact her at ondangwa@yahoo.com or 503-291-1279 to RSVP and for directions.

We will discuss *Half the Sky* by Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn, son and daughter-in-law of Portland State professors Jane Kristof and the late Ladis Kristof. This nonfiction book is described in a *New York Times* book review by Irshad Manji (Sept. 17, 2009) as follows:

An ancient Chinese proverb goes that women hold up half the sky. Nicholas D. Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn want that to be appreciated — on the ground. In the opening pages of this gripping call to conscience, the husband-and-wife team comes out swinging: "Gendercide," the daily slaughter of girls in the developing world, steals more lives in any given decade "than all the genocides of the 20th century." No wonder Kristof and WuDunn, whose coverage of China for *The New York Times* won them a Pulitzer Prize, declare the global struggle for women's equality "the paramount moral challenge" of our era.

Looking ahead, we will read *The Tiger's Wife* by Tea Obreht for July.

--Mary Brannan



One topping or five? Brian Lewis (left) gets ready to enjoy his Ben and Jerry's ice cream, served up at the RAPS Ice Cream Social on May 17. About 35 RAPSters attended the event, which included swing dance lessons by a local disc jockey.

In memoriam: Hildegard Marie Weiss, 1918 - 2012

Professor Emerita of English Hildegard (Hildy) Weiss was born Aug. 13, 1918 in Drake, ND and died March 30, 2012

in Portland after a long illness. During childhood her family moved to Oregon where she attended public schools.

Hildy attended LaVerne College in California (1936-1940), earning a BA degree in English. She undertook graduate studies in English and American literature at UCLA (1943-1946) and completed an MA degree. During 1950-1951 she pursued further graduate studies at New York University.



Hildegard Weiss in 1958

In the fall of 1946 Professor Weiss joined the newly formed Vanport Extension Center as a member of a pioneer faculty cadre established in response to higher education needs created by surging enrollments of place-bound metropolitan area students, notably including veterans of recent military service.

Vanport utilized buildings in an abandoned wartime temporary housing complex that provided minimally adequate support facilities for academic instruction. After it was virtually destroyed by the flooding Columbia River in 1948, the institution was relocated at various sites before finally settling down at PSU's Park Blocks site. Through all of these challenges and adversities, Professor Weiss remained fully and energetically committed to carrying out the institution's instructional mission.

Student staff members dedicated the 1950 *Viking* yearbook to Professor Weiss with copious expressions of gratitude: "... [W]e have so often turned to you for advice. . . We have enjoyed your English classes . . . [Y]ou have generously given your time and effort to many college organizations . . . You are indeed an important part of a happy tradition here at Vanport."

Throughout her long, distinguished and productive career, students and colleagues adjudged Professor Weiss to be a demanding and inspirational teacher and a valued member of the academic community. In 1986 Hildy advanced to Professor of English and in 1987 she was promoted to the rank of Emeritus Professor.

The Weiss family held a private memorial service on April 12 for Hildegard. Survivors include her brother Earl

of Salem, and sister Bette and niece Nancy Walpole of Portland. Hildy's parents, four brothers and a sister preceded her in death. To the Weiss family members, our organization extends its heartfelt sympathy for their loss. This institution has benefitted enormously from her service.

--Emeritus Professors of History Victor C. Dahl
and Charles M. White

Scholarship committee reports in

The second RAPS scholarship of \$1,500 will be awarded this fall. The organization's long-term goal is to raise sufficient money to meet the \$25,000 needed to establish an endowment. The account balance now stands at about \$4,500.

The Scholarship Committee was assisted this year by graduate student Denise Harrison, working on her Capstone project through the Office of Development. Denise has been a great help in guiding us through fund raising procedures. The committee thanks Catherine Faris, Associate Vice President for Development, for her assistance in establishing our scholarship program.

One of the objectives as listed in the RAPS Bylaws is to "support the aims and objectives of the University and promote its endeavors." Providing scholarships is one of the ways we can support the University and demonstrate our value to the administration.

The committee asks for your continuing support in creating an endowed scholarship fund. Contributions are welcome at any time. Checks may be made payable to the PSU Foundation and sent to the RAPS Office.

--Larry Sawyer, Committee Member

Our traveling retirees: Anne Bender's heavenly vision

Editor's note: Board member Anne Bender is on an extended trip to Germany with her husband Jan. Here she recounts an experience she had while visiting relatives in southern Germany.

When I arrived in Sonthofen, Bavaria in January, it was 15 degrees Celsius below zero (5 degrees Fahrenheit). The joy with which I was hugged by my relatives warmed me all over. Sonthofen, southwest of Munich, is a quaint city about the size of Monmouth. It is also the place where a pediatrician saved my life 64 years ago.

On Feb. 18, my birthday, I invited my 82-year-old aunt Maria and a neighbor to dinner at a Vietnamese restaurant. It was buffet style, and when I got up for my ice cream dessert I started a nosebleed into my ice cream cup. Rushing into the bathroom, with my aunt trailing, I spread beautiful red in every direction. It was such a spectacle that other guests came to watch me.

An ambulance arrived and rushed me to the same hospital I had been sent to as a child. My nosebleed was stopped but my blood pressure was dangerously high. I couldn't help thinking back to my earlier time in this place.

My hospital room was located between the nurses' station and the ward for men. As time trickled away, I began to feel sorry for myself and imagined dying in the hospital where I had been taken at the age of four.

Suddenly the door to the men's ward near my bed opened. A beam of light outlined a beautiful being. The big clock above my room door showed it was 2:00 am, and the being was a stark naked young man bravely holding both hands over a spot below his navel. (Hallelujah! If this was my send-off, thank you, God!!)

"You have the wrong room," I said to him. He said nothing but wandered around my bed and sat down on the chair in the corner. Was I worried? No!! I wondered where his wings were. The bathroom near the front door to my room was open; he got up, went in, and locked the door. So much for my fantasy of a heavenly companion; he had to go to the bathroom!

My thoughts were interrupted by two nurses storming into my room, yelling, "Mrs. Bender, have you seen someone coming in here?" I pointed quietly toward the bathroom door. Oh, this was sad, like giving your friend's hiding place away.



Anne Bender, pictured outside the Bender family home in Hanerau, Schleswig-Holstein, in northern Germany. Photo by Jan Bender.

The nurses began banging on the bathroom door, yelling, "Come out immediately!" They sounded more like prison guards than nurses. A little voice behind the door wanted to know where his clothes were. He was told his parents had taken them home.

Finally the door to the bathroom opened and the nurses ushered the young man out. He gave me a last look, and I shrugged my shoulders to indicate that I was sorry. He turned to go, and at that moment I saw evidence of utter cuteness, because only angels can have such darling posteriors.

My hospital stay ended two days and 1,996 Euros later, and I am still laughing.

--Anne Bender

Editor's Note: This is the last issue of the RAPS Sheet until September. Have a great summer!