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Retirement Association of Portland State
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RAPS Sheet, December 2018

Retirement Association of Portland State

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The RAPS Sheet

The newsletter of the Retirement Association of Portland State

DECEMBER 2018

Retirement Association of Portland State

Portland State University–RAPS
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Join RAPS holiday revelers at annual brunch on December 6

PERHAPS THE MOST ANTICIPATED

event on the RAPS calendar is the annual holiday brunch.

Mimosas, beer, and wine will be available at the no-host bar starting at 10:30 am. At 11:00 am, expect to enjoy a Scandinavian-style brunch buffet prepared and presented by the Nordia House café, Broder Söder.

As always, our laden Treat Table will offer goodies, décor items and one-of-a-kind gifts for purchase, with all proceeds to support the RAPS scholarship.

Reserve your spot at \$25 per person by mailing a check made out to the PSU Foundation to: RAPS, Portland State University, PO Box 751, Portland OR 97207-0751. To use a credit card, contact Ilana Tarasyuk at the RAPS Office, 503-725-3447.

The brunch will be held on Thursday, December 6, 10:30 am at Nordia House, 8800 SW Oleson Road, Portland. Please RSVP to Ilana Tarasyuk no later than Monday, November 26.

If you care to donate to the Treat Table, please contact RAPS office manager, Ilana Tarasyuk at 503-725-3477. In addition to holiday treats, we hope to offer art work, gift certificates, and event tickets. All proceeds will benefit the RAPS Scholarship Fund.

See you there!

—Photograph by Larry Sawyer

CO-PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Learning about Canada in Paris

IN THIS COLUMN I am giving a shameless plug for RAPS' Eastern Canada excursion next September by telling you about a Canadian experience I had a few years ago.



It taught me something about Canada that I never knew, but it didn't happen in Canada.

It happened in Paris.

My wife and I were in our rented Marais apartment, looking at each other with that thousand-yard stare you get after being up 24 hours and crossing nine time zones. We had arrived earlier

that day on one of our occasional trips to France to visit our daughter. Full of adrenaline—"We're in Paris!"—we quickly unpacked and ran out to explore the neighborhood. But after a couple of hours the adrenaline lost its battle with exhaustion, and we slogged back to the flat.

We made a decision only wise, mature people would make in such circumstances: let's eat in. I was tasked with getting bread, cold cuts, cheese, and a bottle of wine. Off I went.

The bread, cold cuts, and cheese were easy. But French wine has always been a mystery to me. At the small neighborhood grocery store, I stood in front of shelving stocked with wine, all of it French, all of it baffling. So I reached for a bottle of red with a particularly attractive label and a low price tag. Then I decided to pick up a bottle of white, too.

That's when a young, attractive couple walked down the aisle. How could they be anything but French? They were dressed head to toe in black, although he defied convention with a cream-colored scarf thrown casually around his neck, a complement to her sandy-blond hair. They could have jumped off the cover of *Vogue*.

They took up station to my left, the guy next to me, and began studying the dozens of bottles. They spoke softly to each other in French. "Aha," I thought. "They obviously know their stuff. I'll just buy whatever they buy." So I stood and waited. And waited. Growing impatient, I glanced sideways at him and, embarrassingly, caught his eye.

He said something to me in French. I don't speak French and can barely ask for a glass of *vin rouge* at a restaurant.

"*S'il vous plaît?*" I asked, smiling, knowing that my ear-shattering accent would tip them off that I was American or Norwegian or anything but French.

"Oh, I thought you were French!" the guy said. "I was asking if you would suggest a wine." His English was flawless, but he had a bit of an accent that I couldn't pinpoint. And he thought I was French. No Frenchman would ever think that. (My daughter's boyfriend once described me, not to my face, as the "most classically American" person he had ever met.)

"Well, I assumed you were French," I replied, "and I was just going to buy whatever you did." Then: "I take it you're not French?"

"We're from Québec," he answered. And my lesson about Canada began.

"So you're Canadians," I commented. Oops!

"No, Québécois," his friend piped up.

"Oh, sorry," I said. "My mistake." But I was dumbfounded. So they were from Québec. Check. Which is in Canada. Check. But they weren't Canadian?

The exchange was quite friendly, and he and I made some small talk about our mutual ignorance of French wines. We both took identical bottles from the shelf and went our ways, offering cordial smiles and goodbyes.

I doubt if every resident of Québec would agree with the couple I met in Paris. Still, Québec, a French-speaking island in an English-speaking country, is intriguing. Like many Americans, my knowledge of Canada is woefully casual, formed by a few vacations. If I were pressed, I'd probably blurt out clichés describing Canada as a peaceful country with great scenery and Canadians as unfailingly polite.

That sells Canada short, as I discovered that evening in Paris. It's a massive, diverse country with its own history and its own culture, as you can discover for yourself next September. That's when RAPS takes off for an eight-day tour of Eastern Canada. And yes, the tour includes Québec, with stops in both Montreal and Québec City. Plus a portion of your fare will support the RAPS Scholarship.

Elsewhere in this edition of the *RAPS Sheet*, you'll find an ad with more details about the trip. In the meantime, long live Canada and *vive le Québec!*

—Doug Swanson

RAPS Group Reports

Book Group

THE BOOK GROUP met on November 12 at the home of Eileen and Steve Brennan to discuss *Leonardo Da Vinci* by Walter Isaacson. It is a beautiful book and a magnificent biography. As we talked we were repeatedly amazed and impressed by the range of Leonardo's ideas. He was curious about so many things, and explored them in such detail. Some explorations were used in his art. Others seemed to have no immediate utility, other than to add to his store of knowledge. We were also interested in how much of his work was left as notes and sketches in his notebooks, with no attempt to present it for others to use.

On December 18 we will meet at the home of Joan Shireman, 13584 SE Snowfire Drive, Happy Valley. Contact her at joanshireman@gmail.com or 503-698-9951 to let her know whether you can be there. We will discuss *The Atomic Weight of Love*, a novel by Elizabeth J. Church. The book is an exploration of the life of the heroine between the 1940s and the 1970s, as she subverts her career aspirations to those of her husband, and later finds more freedom in another era. It is said to be a captivating novel and had excellent reviews. And a member who has read it tells us we will learn a lot about crows.

In January, for those who can think beyond the holiday season, we will be reading *Between the World and Me* by Ta-Nehisi Coates. It is an acclaimed book, winner of many awards, and offers a framework for understanding the racial history of America and its current tensions.

The book group meets at 1:30 pm on the third Tuesday of every month. New members are always welcome.

—Joan Shireman

Bridge Group

THE RAPS BRIDGE GROUP meets in the afternoon, generally on the first Tuesday of each month. We begin play at 12:15 pm. We try to finish up by 4 pm. We meet in Smith Center, on the second floor.

Please mark your calendars for the following upcoming bridge group meetings:

Tuesday, December 4, in SMSU 258

Tuesday, January 8, in SMSU 258 (second Tuesday)

Tuesday, February 5, in SMSU 258

I will send out the reminder email notice about one week prior to each date we play.

The RAPS Bridge Group members are very friendly and are always looking for new players. If you wish to join us, please contact Steve Brennan, 503-646-6297. My email address is the.steve.brennan@gmail.com.

—Steve Brennan

Hiking Group

THE RAPS HIKING GROUP met for the final hike of the year on Tuesday, November 27, and explored the Rock Creek Regional Trail from the Kaiser Woods Natural Area to Bethany Lake Park.

The hike took place along Springville Creek and passed through meadows and forested and wetlands areas. After the hike, the group enjoyed a lunch at Bethany's Table restaurant in the Bethany Village area.

Our December meeting is a potluck lunch and 2019 hiking planning session at the home of Larry and Diane Sawyer. Please contact Larry Sawyer at 503-771-1616 or larry_sawyer@comcast.net for further information.

For more details about the planning event or upcoming hikes please consult the RAPS hikers' website: <https://www.pdx.edu/raps/RAPS-Hikers>

—Larry Sawyer

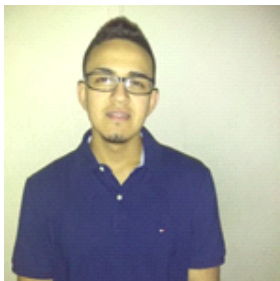


The RAPS Hiking Group explored Deschutes River State Park in October. The route had substantial climbs and led to views of the east end of the Gorge and expansive canyon vistas.

—Photograph by Deve Swaim

PSU Women's Association Scholarship recipients

PSUWA SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS for the 2018-19 academic year are Juan Gutierrez-Cardenas, majoring in health/fitness and Yahaira Martinez-Ponce, majoring in social work.



Juan is the first in his family to finish high school and he was the salutatorian of his class; he fell short by only one point to tie for valedictorian. He dreams of one day owning a gym of his own. Juan envisions the gym as one that is affordable for every-

one, where he can help people find a balance in their lives.



Yahaira, coming from a low-income and minority family, is grateful for the opportunities that have opened up for her, in part because of the PSUWA Scholarship. Yahaira said she wants to give people the chance to dream and not lose hope—but to pursue their dreams. She

hopes to make this world a better one, one step at a time.

—Barbara Alberty, Scholarship Committee Co-Chair

Recent RAPS Scholarship contributions

RAPS SCHOLARSHIP DONATIONS between September 1 and November 1, 2018, were made by:

Priscilla M. Blumel in memory of Rebecca Hein
Steven and Sharon Brenner
Ralph Bunch in memory of Eleonora Bunch
Georgia Ronan Crampton
Yvonne Hajda in memory of Jan Hajda
Clarence Hein
Jean S. Morrison in memory of Hugh G. Lovell
Roger and Sylvia Mosely in memory of Robert “Vogie” Vogelsang
Inger M. Olsen
Pat and Fred Squire in memory of Rebecca Hein
Doug and Barbara Swanson

From no student debt to garnishing Social Security

A SEA CHANGE HAS OCCURRED in the way students and their families—including parents and grandparents—pay for a college education.

Since the 1960s, U.S. college costs have increased exponentially. Predatory lenders have proliferated and 2018 student loan debt is \$1.52 trillion, as documented in Zack Friedman’s June 13 article for *Forbes* (www.forbes.com).

The result is that more than 173,000 parents and grandparents have seen their Social Security checks garnished to pay student loan debts (<https://www.gao.gov/assets/690/681722.pdf>).

Now an organization called Strike Debt Portland (www.strikedebtportland.org) wishes to find people whose Social Security checks are garnished to pay student loans. The organization will then raise money and award funds in 2019 to as many people as possible.

If you know of such debtors, please contact Roberta Badger-Cain, who is a Strike Debt member.

—Leonard Cain and Roberta Badger-Cain

Upcoming winter term member events

JANUARY (Thursday, January 17) David Bangsberg, dean of OHSU/PSU School of Public Health, presents “Why Public Health Matters: Reflections on HIV to Homelessness.”

FEBRUARY (Thursday, February 21) Melody Valdini, associate professor of political science, speaks on “The Decline of Democracy in Governments across the World: A Temporary Shift or a New World Order?”

MARCH (Thursday, March 21) Annual spring potluck and presentation by Christine Meadows, director of PSU’s Opera Program, and opera students performing excerpts from the 2019 spring opera.



RAPS GOES TO Eastern Canada!

SEPTEMBER 3-10, 2019

Discover the best of Eastern Canada with RAPS September 3-10, 2019! Our tour is led by Collette, a travel company with more than 100 years' experience. And if you book by March 4, 2019, you'll save \$100 per person! • We start in **Montreal**, one of UNESCO's Cities of Design. • Then we're off to **Quebec City**, where we can explore everything from a local sugar shack to world-class museums. • **Ottawa**, with its small-town vibe, has great museums and galleries. • A short drive takes us to **Rockport**, where we'll enjoy a memorable cruise through this historic region. • Finally, we visit exciting **Toronto** and cruise to the base of thundering **Niagara Falls**.

\$3,199

per person if booked
by March 4, based on
double occupancy

Includes: R/T airfare from Portland • Hotels •
Hotel Transfers • Air Taxes, Fees / Surcharges

To learn more, contact:
Larry Sawyer
Retirement Association of
Portland State
503-771-1616
larry_sawyer@comcast.net

You can still help
the RAPS Scholar-
ship program even
if you can't make
our trip to Eastern
Canada. When you
schedule your trip
with Collette—and
Collette travels to
every corner of the
globe—just mention
that you're a RAPS
member and wish to
contribute to the
scholarship fund.
Collette will make
sure a portion of the
amount you pay
goes to the RAPS
Scholarship fund!

Recent RAPS member events—from the vistas of the Deschutes River to the genius of Renaissance Europe



Hiking group members enjoy a lunch break during their exploration of the Deschutes River State Park in October.

—Photograph by Larry Sawyer



Book group members (from left) Brian Lewis, Steve Brennan, Nancy Chapman, Joan Shireman, Phyllis Leonard, Felicia Wirtz, and Gwen Pierce had a lively discussion of Walter Isaacson's *Leonardo Da Vinci* in November.

—Photograph by Eileen Brennan