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Retirement Association of Portland State
(RAPS)

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RAPS Sheet, April 2019

Retirement Association of Portland State

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The RAPS Sheet

The newsletter of the Retirement Association of Portland State

APRIL 2019

Retirement Association of Portland State

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Thomas B. Cox, chief governance officer of software startup firm StrongBlock, presents at the April 18 member meeting at Smith Memorial Student Union, followed by the RAPS Annual Ice Cream Social.

Thomas Cox addresses cryptocurrency on April 18

THOMAS B. COX WILL PRESENT

“Blockchain Changes How We Trust: What You Need to Know about Bitcoin and Other Cryptocurrencies” at the member meeting Thursday, April 18. Cox is the chief governance officer at StrongBlock, a blockchain software startup firm specializing in information technology and services.

Cox’s extensive professional experience includes providing management consulting, executive coaching, and leadership training across industries. He had his own consulting firm, Cox Business Consulting, Inc., for over a decade and also consulted for PricewaterhouseCoopers, IBM Global Services, and Oracle Corporation. He is the creator of Becoming the Best Boss (B3) Coaching and Training System, offering executive mentoring

and coaching to CEOs, business owners, and senior executives.

Cox is a graduate of the University of Chicago, earning an AB degree, with honors, in behavioral sciences.

The April 18 meeting starts with a light lunch at noon in 333 SMSU. Thomas Cox begins speaking at 12:45 pm.

The RAPS Annual Ice Cream social immediately follows the presentation.

Bitcoin: a cryptocurrency, a form of electronic cash.

Blockchain: a system in which a growing list of records (called blocks) made in bitcoin or other cryptocurrency is maintained across several computers linked in a network.

CO-PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Seeking to do good in a cold place

NEARLY EVERY SPRING we bid farewell to our RAPS office manager. Managers usually spend one year in the job before moving on to begin their professional careers or to pursue an advanced degree.



Ilana Tarasyuk

This year's office manager, Ilana Tarasyuk, is an exception—in two ways. Most of our managers are graduate students, but Ilana is an undergraduate who is scheduled to receive her bachelor's degree in finance in June. And if you think she's using her shiny new degree to swim with the financial sharks or to go after an MBA, think again.

Ilana is heading to Alaska, where the only things taller than Wall Street's glass towers are icebergs and mountains. There she hopes to teach financial literacy in impoverished communities. If that doesn't sound like a typical postgraduate plan, it may be because Ilana's background isn't typical.

Ilana was born in Russia and came to the United States with her family when she was three months old, part of a huge migration of Russians that followed the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991. Her family joined a conservative religious community in Vancouver, Washington.

"I wasn't allowed to do a lot," she recalls of her childhood. "I didn't watch TV, I didn't have sleepovers." Ilana also didn't speak a word of English, and being fluent in Russian wasn't much help in kindergarten. "It was awful," she says of her first months in school. "I cried every single day."

Ilana's father died when she was four years old, struck down by leukemia, leaving her mother to support herself and five

children by cleaning houses. When Ilana was older, she helped her mom on the job. "Cleaning houses taught me everything I needed to know about how to work and how to be diplomatic," she says.

Ilana entered college at 19, a step that she acknowledges was "sort of rebellious," especially when most of her peers were getting married and starting families. "Thankfully, my mom was always about education and knowledge, so she was OK with me doing it," she says.

She wanted to get away from Vancouver, but not too far away. Portland State was the obvious answer, and Ilana had heard PSU had a good business school. As she worked toward her degree, she also held several jobs, including stints in the Foundation, School of Business, and Alumni Association. Ilana's also a peer mentor for the SBA, helping new students get their footing. "I'm there for them if they have questions, I teach them time management—it's a lot of fun," she says.

Going to Alaska to teach money management is an outgrowth of her childhood. There wasn't much money to manage, and what money there was sometimes wasn't managed well. Ilana's considering several nonprofit educational organizations that operate in Fairbanks, and she wants to concentrate on Native populations.

"You have to approach it very carefully and gently," Ilana says of teaching money management. "I think I'm ready for that challenge."

Best wishes, Ilana, and thank you for your contributions to RAPS!

—Doug Swanson

Upcoming Member Events

MAY (Thursday, May 9) Annual President's Luncheon for retired PSU faculty and staff hosted by President Rahmat Shoureshi at noon in the SMSU Ballroom.

JUNE (Date to be determined) Wine tour for members and guests led by Scott Burns.

AUGUST (Thursday, August 15) RAPS Summer Picnic, noon to 4 pm, Willamette Park, Portland

RAPS Elections Ballot Spring 2019



STEVE BRENNAN joined RAPS in 2011, after he retired from work in the private sector and his wife Eileen retired from the PSU faculty. Currently Steve serves as chair of the RAPS Award Committee and as organizer of the RAPS Bridge

Group. Prior to the Brennans' move to Oregon in 1984, Steve earned his PhD in sociology from the University of Kansas where he was a member of the research faculty.



BRIAN LEWIS worked in Smith Memorial, Facilities, and Human Resources in his 36-year career at Portland State. He is just completing a three-year term as Secretary for RAPS. Brian and his wife, Chris, are active members of RAPS. Before becoming Secretary, Brian served

as chair of the Membership Committee.



ANSEL JOHNSON is professor emeritus of geology at Portland State, where he specialized in geophysics and groundwater. He served RAPS as Member-at-Large and chair of the Awards Committee before assuming the role of Treasurer in 2016.



CONSTANCE ANDERSEN came to PSU with an extensive background in public relations and community service. She worked as an office administrator for several units within PSU including the Center for Urban Studies, Graduate School of Social Work, Institute for

Nonprofit Management, and College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

CO-PRESIDENT (2-year term)

- Steve Brennan
- Other _____

SECRETARY (2-year term)

- Brian Lewis
- Other _____

TREASURER (2-year term)

- Ansel Johnson
- Other _____

MEMBER-AT-LARGE (2-year term)

- Constance Andersen
- Other _____

Ballots may be dropped off at the RAPS Office, Room 212 Campus Public Safety Building, or mailed to PSU/RAPS, PO Box 751, Portland OR 97207-0751. Ballots must be postmarked by Friday, May 31, 2019 to be counted.

RAPS Group Reports

Book Group

THE BOOK GROUP did not meet in March. As we planned our March meeting, we discovered that we were a traveling group and very few were going to be in Portland at the regular book group meeting time. So we decided to postpone discussing the book we selected for March until April 16 when we will meet at the home of Felicia Wirtz.

We will discuss *Perfume River*, a novel by Robert Olen Butler, winner of the Pulitzer Prize. Set in North Florida, *Perfume River* is the story of an aging couple whose relationship has become rather routine, and the lasting impact of differing family positions about the Vietnam War. It is described by a reviewer as “thoughtful, introspective fiction of the highest caliber.” Felicia’s home is at 16433 Avamere Court., Portland. Contact Felicia at 503-645 0947 or feliciawirtz@gmail.com to let her know whether you will be able to be there.

In May we plan to read *Evolution’s Captain* by Peter Nichols, the story of the captain of the *Beagle*, who took Darwin along on his voyage.

The book group meets the third Tuesday of every month (except March 2019). 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, April 2, in SMSU 258

Tuesday, May 7, in SMSU 258

Tuesday, June 4, 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’S March 26 hike took place at Powell Butte, an east Portland city park with large underground water reservoirs, on one of the ancient Boring volcanoes. The hike was anything but boring. Eight hikers walked a large loop of approximately 4.5 miles around the park, uphill and down, through fields and forest, on a beautiful early spring day. There were a few trillium and cardamine flowers blooming; some of the group spotted a coyote amid the shrubbery. After the walk, the eight ate lunch at a Chinese restaurant (HoHo’s) off Powell and César E. Chávez Boulevards.

The hike planned for Tuesday, April 23, will take place on the Catherine Creek Trail in the Eastern Columbia River Gorge in the Gifford Pinchot National Forest. The hike is a 2.6-mile loop with a 466-foot elevation gain. The trail begins near White Salmon, Washington, and the hike should provide views of waterfalls, an abundance of wildflowers (this is the best time of year to view them), Mount Hood, and the Columbia River Gorge. Carpooling is strongly recommended. A more detailed description and directions are available at: <https://www.alltrails.com/trail/us/washington/catherine-creek-trail-021>

Please contact Larry Sawyer at 503-771-1616 or larry_sawyer@comcast.net for further information.

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

—Larry Sawyer

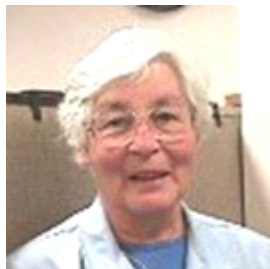


RAPS hikers enjoyed classic vistas, fragrant forests, and dry, sunny weather on the March 26 hike on Powell Butte.

—Photograph by Tom Dieterich

In memoriam: Mary L. Branson Taylor, 1932-2019

MARY L. BRANSON TAYLOR, who served Portland State as a professor of biology for nearly four decades, died February 11. She was 86 years old and had suffered from Alzheimer's disease for many years.



Professor Taylor was born in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, on November 24, 1932. She majored in bacteriology and minored in

chemistry and zoology at the University of Idaho, from which she received a bachelor's degree in 1954. In 1959 she received a Ph.D. from the University of Illinois in bacteriology, with minors in organic chemistry and biochemistry.

Following graduation from the University of Illinois, Professor Taylor was a postdoctoral fellow at the U.S. Public Health Service, Oak Ridge National Laboratory. She joined Portland State in 1962. She was a member of the American Society for Microbiology and

contributed to scientific works in *Nature*, *Acta*, and *Bacteriological Proceedings*.

Professor Taylor was an active member of her community, assisting science teachers at local high schools, and participating in local hiking groups, the Campfire Girls, the arts, and in her church, Lake Grove Presbyterian. She was mayor of Durham, a small city located between Tigard and Tualatin. She was also a member of Durham's city council and planning commission.

Professor Taylor is survived by two children, Katherine Horton and Elizabeth Taylor, and two grandchildren, Elizabeth and Taylor Horton.

In 2003 Professor Taylor established the Mary Branson Taylor Scholarship in the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences at the University of Idaho. For information on contributing to the scholarship, call the University of Idaho Foundation, 208-885-4000, or email gifts@uidaho.edu.

—Doug Swanson

RAPS welcomes recent retirees and new members

Nancy Beaini
Michael Bower
Thomas Bray
Arlene Brockel
John Christy
Scott Cooper
Lidiya Demchuk
Marion Dresner
Kerry Gilbreth
Sylvia Giroux
Michele Goldschmidt
Charles Grant
Tenora Grigsby
Cheryl Hagseth
Michael Haluska
Michael Harvey
Ralph Holcomb
Mary Holmes

Tanya Jacobsmuhlen
Ellen Justice
Thomas Kemper
Kristen Kern
Martha Lacy
Sheri Little
Joan Malling
Mark Mentzer
Pamela Miller
Barbara Pijan
Jennifer Portis
David Shapiro
Cary Sneider
Maria Talbott
Ruben Torres
Suy Tran
Joy Williams
Lisa Zurk

Remember the special women in your life with a Mother's Day donation to the RAPS Scholarship fund

HOORAY FOR ALL THE MOMS in our lives! Hooray for the mothers, grandmothers, godmothers, stepmothers, mothers-in-law, aunts, wives, partners, sisters, friends, fellow moms, mentors, and women who love with a mother's heart.

Chances are you know at least a few moms who deserve to be remembered and honored on Sunday, May 12, Mother's Day. You can do this and help our scholarship fund at the same time.

For every contribution that is made to the RAPS Scholarship Fund we will send a beautiful Mother's Day card directly to the person you choose in time for Mother's Day with your name on an insert which tells of your contribution in that person's honor or memory.

When you send your contribution to Ilana in the RAPS office, please include your name and the amount of your contribution. Include the name of the person you are honoring or remembering and their relationship to you. Also include the name and address of the person to whom the card should be sent. You may include a sentence or two that we will write in the card for you. These cards will be lovely and hand addressed with an appropriate stamp.

Ilana's address is Ilana Tarasyuk, RAPS Office Manager, Portland State University—RAPS, P. O. Box 751, Portland OR 97207-0751.



—Barbara Alberty, co-chair, Scholarship Committee

—Photographs by Eileen Brennan



PSU's spring opera production of Mozart's *La Finta Giardiniera* (The Pretend Gardener) was previewed at the RAPS March 21 meeting. Tickets are available for the April, 19, 20, 26, and 28 performances at pdx.edu/boxoffice or call 503-725-3307.