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RAPS Sheet: Monthly Newsletter

Retirement Association of Portland State  
(RAPS)

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## RAPS Sheet, February 2021

Retirement Association of Portland State

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# The RAPS Sheet

The newsletter of the Retirement Association of Portland State

FEBRUARY 2021

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## FEBRUARY 18 GENERAL MEETING

# How Covid-19 infects the economy

**“THE ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES** of Covid-19 and Hereafter (the Adverb, Not the Noun)” is the title of the February RAPS member program, offered by Tom Potiowsky, professor emeritus of economics.

His virtual talk is scheduled to begin at noon on Thursday, February



18, using the videoconferencing platform Zoom.

Potiowsky retired in September 2017 as professor and

chair of the Economics Department at Portland State. He also served as the state economist for Oregon on two occasions (1999-2006 and 2008-2011).

He now serves as senior adviser and former director of the Northwest

Economic Research Center (NERC). Housed at Portland State, NERC focuses on economic research activities to support public policy and private objectives in the greater metropolitan area and the Pacific Northwest.

Potiowsky is well known to RAPS members. He has been invited several times over the years to talk to RAPS, each time bringing his academic and government service experience to bear on the topic at hand.

Although the RAPS meeting starts at noon on February 18, the “Zoom Room” will open at 11:30 a.m. to allow RAPS members to log in ahead of time and visit with one another.

RAPS will provide the link to join the meeting several days in advance of the event. Potiowsky’s presentation will begin a few minutes after noon.

# PSU celebrates its 75th anniversary

Portland State’s 75th birthday is coming up fast.

On February 14, PSU celebrates Founder’s Day, which President Stephen Percy called “an occasion to recommit to our resilient roots and to celebrate our spirit of service” in a “From the President” column he wrote last fall for *Portland State Magazine*.

“Resilience” is one of the key themes of the University’s observation

of its 75th year. It is both a nod to the many challenges PSU and higher education are facing today as well the University’s history, which, as Percy wrote, “is punctuated with adversity, beginning with the 1948 Vanport flood and now with Covid-19.”

*continued on page 2*

## CO-PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

# Online Zoom RAPS events gain acceptance

**DURING THE MONTHS** of “no in-person meetings on campus,” our member meetings have been virtual, using Zoom. A survey of RAPS members, conducted last September, indicated that members were not willing to attend in-person events until getting vaccinated against coronavirus. Attendance at virtual meetings has been increasing gradually over the Covid-time months, as folks become more comfortable with the Zoom technology.



The RAPS Board is making an effort to entice more members to attend virtual RAPS events. We have been making phone calls to sing the praises of online meetings. RAPS virtual events have a scheduled time before the start of the official part of the event. This pre-event time is great for visiting with people we have not seen much in the past few months. A creative committee planned last December's RAPS Holiday Gathering within the bounds of a virtual event. We had a two-hour open house on Zoom. There was time for social visiting and two rounds of PSU trivia. We watched attendees consume their family holiday treats. Scott Burns, our RAPS wine expert, explained characteristics of a number of member-selected wines. We watched a YouTube video showing PSU's Opera Program director, Christine Meadows, imitating Julia Child baking a chocolate cake. The consensus on the gathering was: entertaining, funny, and informative (Scott knows about wine soils, for sure).

I just finished attending the January 2021 RAPS member meeting. The speaker this month, political science professor Chris Shortell, presented a talk, “Post-Trump America: Where Does American Politics Go from Here?” What great timing. (Thanks to Dawn White for scheduling this speaker and this topic at this time.) Professor Shortell shared with the audience that, given the uncertainty about events after the November election, he waited until President Biden's inauguration before putting finishing touches on his talk. The January member meeting had 36 people logged in; that is our largest attendance for a virtual RAPS event. I would guess that attendance for the January member meeting was up in part due to happy, satisfied RAPS members sharing their positive experience from the Holiday Gathering.

Looking forward: Hooray! Vaccinations are days or weeks away for those Oregonians and Washingtonians in the age groups of our RAPS members. For two-shot vaccines, there is a lag between first shot and the follow-up shot. After the final shot three weeks or so are required to develop the full development of protection. Thus it looks as if by the beginning of fall term (hopefully) on-campus RAPS events will begin again. Maybe by the summer RAPS will be able to hold its annual picnic. We could bring food to eat ourselves (not share with others). We would be out of doors and socially distanced.

Until then get vaccinated when available and stay safe.

—Steve Brennan

## Portland State's 75th anniversary . . .

From page 1

Vanport, a temporary city built to house shipyard workers during World War II, was the site of the Vanport Extension Center, which evolved into Portland State University. On May 30, 1948, a railroad dike failed, allowing the Columbia River to rush in, destroying the city and the Extension Center. Four years passed before the school found a permanent home in the Park Blocks. Stephen Epler (1909-1997), who established the Extension Center, was the founder of Portland State.

In observance of the University's 75 years, *The RAPS Sheet* will publish articles in the next four issues that focus on aspects of Portland State's history. The first, an enjoyable

and enlightening quiz written by the RAPS History Preservation Committee, appears on page 4. A longer version of the same quiz was a hit at the Holiday Gathering last December.

Seventy-five years after its founding, Portland State has nearly 200,000 alumni, an enrollment of more than 26,000, an economic impact in Oregon of more than \$1.5 billion, and—well, we don't want to give away *all* the answers to the quiz.

Happy 75th, Portland State!

The web page for the anniversary is: <https://www.pdx.edu/75th-anniversary>

# RAPS Group Reports

## Book Group

**THE RAPS BOOK GROUP** met on January 19 to discuss *Stubborn Twig: Three Generations in the Life of a Japanese American Family* by Lauren Kessler. There was much to discuss in this account of the immigration of a Japanese family to Oregon around 1900: their life and struggle to become established merchants and orchardists in Hood River, then the experience of the internship of the Japanese on the West Coast and their scattering as they returned after the war.

We had an interesting discussion of the tension between assimilation into a new culture and the retaining of old traditions. There was more discussion and disagreement than usual, but we all agreed that we admired the work ethic and determination of these families, and we pitied the Japanese immigrant wives, without friends in a new land, and kept at home by tradition and caring for large families. A few members had been to Japan, and their observations enriched the discussion.

The next meeting will be on Tuesday, February 16, at our usual 1:30 time, and again by Zoom. We will discuss *Have You Seen Luis Velez?* by Catherine Ryan Hyde. The story, of the friendship between a boy who feels he doesn't belong and an elderly neighbor, was recommended to us by a member of another group as a book "that makes one really feel good." We are looking forward to discussing it.

The RAPS Book Group meets the third Tuesday of each month, traditionally in the homes of various members. Currently we are using Zoom for our meetings. Any RAPS member is welcome to join the group.

—Joan Shireman

## Mystifying RAPS mystery solved!

**HAVE YOU RECENTLY MAILED** a gift to the RAPS Scholarship Fund, and then heard nothing more? No "thank you" from RAPS. No "thank you" from the PSU Foundation. No response, period.

"What is going on?" you undoubtedly asked yourself. "They haven't even deposited my check!"

An alert RAPS member brought the mystery to light, resulting in three RAPS Board members launching a hard-hitting investigation and one of our co-presidents leaping into action.

It turned out that the mailroom was holding the mail, because the RAPS office, like many PSU offices, was closed due to the pandemic. Pat Squire, our steadfast co-president, picked up the mail and carried the checks to the Foundation, and they were subsequently deposited.

And now that we know what happens to mail when the office is closed, we have arranged to have it picked up weekly. We have also decided to ask you to send your gifts directly to the Foundation rather than to the RAPS office.

So we offer our apologies to those of you whose gifts were not acknowledged. We will get letters to you as soon as possible. And know that we are indeed grateful for your gifts to the scholarship.

Please send any contributions to the PSU Foundation, 1600 SW 4th Ave., #730, Portland, OR 97201. Checks should be made out to the PSU Foundation, and identified as intended for the RAPS Scholarship fund.

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## Bridge and Hiking Groups

**BRIDGE GROUP AND HIKING GROUP** activities have been suspended due to the coronavirus pandemic.

## Upcoming RAPS events

### MARCH

#### Thursday, March 18

Christine Meadows, PSU Opera Program director, and Chuck Dillard, assistant professor of music and theater, give a virtual presentation showing the results of a project begun in fall 2020: two productions of Gian Carlo Menotti's one-act opera, *The Old Maid and the Thief*. One production features an all-male cast, the other all-female.

### APRIL

#### Friday, April 23

The President's Annual Luncheon for Retired Staff and Faculty, hosted by PSU president Steve Percy, is scheduled

to be held in the PSU Ballroom. This meeting will be converted to a Zoom event if the pandemic prevents an in-person gathering.

### MAY

#### Thursday, May 20

Maryhelen Kincaid, project leader, gives a presentation on "The Vanport Placemaking Project: Remembering and Honoring Vanport's Significant Cultural History." The May meeting's traditional ice cream social may be deferred.

# Yes, you served Portland State for years . . .

## But how much do you *really* know about PSU?

**1. Who is Smith Memorial Student Union named for?**

- A. The state board president who allowed the original college to exist as long as it enrolled at least 1,000 students.
- B. The first provost of Portland State after it became a university.
- C. The major donor who provided the funding to build the student union.
- D. A student on the PSU team that won *College Bowl*, a television quiz show, in 1965.

**2. While Bill Clinton was president, how many visits did he make to PSU?**

- A. 1 visit.
- B. 2 visits.
- C. 3 visits.
- D. 5 visits.

**3. How many degree programs does PSU currently offer?**

- A. 203 in total.
- B. 89 in total.
- C. 93 in total.
- D. 350 in total.

**4. Lincoln Hall was once:**

- A. An elementary school.
- B. A middle school.
- C. A high school.
- D. A trade school.

**5. What was the date PSU was founded?**

- A. 1964
- B. 1952
- C. 1946
- D. 1956

**6. What nearly wiped out the first PSU campus?**

- A. A financial recession that affected the budget.
- B. Zoning issues that restricted the use of wartime buildings.
- C. Flooding of the Vanport area.
- D. The Columbus Day storm.

**7. Last year PSU celebrated the 50th anniversary of which program?**

- A. Black Studies
- B. Public Health
- C. Social Work
- D. Women's Studies

**8. Approximately how many people are currently employed by PSU?**

- A. 7,500
- B. 6,400
- C. 5,000
- D. 4,300

**9. When was Portland State granted the status of a four-year college?**

- A. 1955
- B. 1961
- C. 1948
- D. 1963

**10. How many buildings does PSU have?**

- A. 50
- B. 45
- C. 38
- D. 60

**11. What percentage of current PSU students are from Oregon?**

- A. 55%
- B. 78%
- C. 65%
- D. 40%

**12. What PSU-related performance has been viewed 1 billion times?**

- A. The 2019 production of *La Finta Giardiniera* by the PSU Opera Program.
- B. PSU graduate Esperanza Spaulding's performance at the Obama White House.
- C. Faculty member Darrell Grant's production of *Sanctuaries*.
- D. Student Madisen Hallberg's rendition of the national anthem in the Park Blocks with opera singer Emmanuel Henreid.

**ANSWERS**

**1: D—Michael Smith of College Bowl.** The student union is named after Michael Smith, a key team member of the 1965 PSU team that won the GE College Bowl.

**2: B—2 visits.** President Clinton attended the 1995 Pacific Rim Economic Conference and was the 1998 PSU Commencement speaker.

**3: A—203.** PSU currently offers 203 programs: bachelor's: 93; master's: 89; doctoral: 21

**4: C—A high school.** Lincoln High School first graduated students in 1875! From 1912 to 1952, PSU's Lincoln Hall served as the campus of Lincoln High School.

**5: C—1946.** In 1946 PSU first opened its doors to 220 students as the Vanport Extension Center. The first college was in Vanport, a city

built to house wartime shipyard workers.

**6: C—The Vanport Flood.** The Columbia River broke through a dike on May 30, 1948, after torrential rains, letting in a 10-foot wall of water.

**7: A—Black Studies.** PSU's was the first Black Studies program offered in the Pacific Northwest, and offered courses to Albina residents as well offering community assistance.

**8: B—6,400.** Research and instructional faculty: 1,796; academic professionals and managers: 742; administration: 91; staff: 680; graduate assistants: 680; student employees: 2,019; other: 355.

**9: A—1955.** Given the "baby boom," legislators realized that they needed to have a

college in Portland that could supply sufficient graduates to meet the expected demand for public school teachers.

**10: A—50 buildings.** The 50 PSU buildings include the new multi-purpose building, housing programs of PSU, PCC, OHSU, and city of Portland being built at SW 4th and Montgomery. It will feature ground-level retail, a dental clinic, classrooms, and a variety of offices.

**11: B—78%.** Top states represented at PSU: California, Washington, Hawaii, Idaho, and Colorado.

**12: D—Hallberg and Henreid duet.** Their rendition of the national anthem recorded for the 2020 PSU graduation was picked up by many news outlets.