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Retirement Association of Portland State
(RAPS)

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RAPS Sheet, December 2023

Retirement Association of Portland State

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The RAPS Sheet

The newsletter of the Retirement Association of Portland State

DECEMBER 2023

RAPS VOGELSANG
SCHOLARSHIP APPEAL
SEE PAGE 3

Retirement Association of Portland State

Portland State University—RAPS
Post Office Box 751
Portland OR 97207-0751
Campus Public Safety Building
Second Floor, Room 212
SW Montgomery at Broadway

Office Manager

Chethana Muppalam
Telephone: 503-725-3447
Email: rapsmail@pdx.edu
Office hours: To be announced
Campus mail: RAPS
Web: psu-raps.org

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Claudine Fisher, professor emerita of French, receives the Outstanding PSU Retiree Award from Steve Brennan at last year's RAPS Holiday Brunch. In addition to her three decades on the Portland State faculty, Fisher served for 14 years as Honorary Consul of France in Portland for the State of Oregon.

RAPS Holiday Brunch set for December 7

THERE'S STILL time to reserve your spot at the RAPS annual Holiday Brunch!

The brunch is on Thursday, December 7, at 11 a.m. at Augustana Lutheran Church. Please contact the RAPS office manager, Chethana Muppalam, at rapsmail@pdx.edu or 503-725-3447 to make your reservation. Cost is \$30 per person.

Please put your check in the mail by Saturday, December 2.

Make your check payable to the PSU Foundation and write "RAPS Holiday Brunch" on the memo line. Mail to RAPS, Portland State University, PO Box 751, Portland, OR 97207-0751.

Augustana Lutheran Church is located at 2710 NE 14th Avenue in Portland. There's easy on-street parking, and RAPS members can access the church on NE 15th Avenue. You can also reach the church on TriMet Line 8 Jackson Park/NE 15th. Doors will open at 10:30 a.m.

Cheryl's on 12th will provide a delightful buffet brunch. In addition, enjoy our usual array of mimosas and assorted wines.

A fun and festive part of our Holiday event is the "Goodie Table," which is filled with fabulous desserts, breads, books, gifts, and arts-and-crafts items made by RAPS members.

If you'd like to bring something for the table, please set what you think is a reasonable price. And don't forget to bring cash or a check to purchase a goodie to take home. All proceeds benefit the RAPS Robert Vogelsang Scholarship.

Holiday Brunch at a glance

When:
Thursday, Dec. 7.

Doors open:
10:30 a.m.

Brunch begins:
11 a.m.

Location:
Augustana Lutheran Church
2710 NE 14th Avenue
Portland

Cost:
\$30 per person.

Reservations:
Contact RAPS: rapsmail@pdx.edu / 503-725-3447.

CO-PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Road trip renews appreciation for Oregon—and RAPS

I AM WRITING this column during the week of Thanksgiving. Like many of you, this is a time of year when I pause to take stock of the many things for which I am grateful.

This year the process of reflection has been particularly significant for me. You see, earlier this month I found myself spending a week in the Flint Hills of east-



ern Kansas followed by a 1,800-mile car trip back to Oregon across parts of Kansas, Nebraska, Wyo-

oming, Utah, and Idaho. While I would not want to disparage Marion, Kansas, or any of the places we encountered along I-80 or I-84, upon arriving home, my husband and I had a renewed appreciation for what we have in

Oregon in general and Portland in particular.

We are fortunate to have the natural beauty found in Oregon, as well as quality health care we enjoy in Portland. While we were gone we missed good restaurants and, in some cases, even finding a restaurant other than Sonic Drive-in or Subway. Although we met some very nice people, we encountered situations where these same people's hands were tied because of a lack of

infrastructure. We even came to appreciate the Oregon District of the United States Postal Service's Customer Service. I could go on in this vein, but you get my point about being thankful for Oregon and Portland.

Last spring, during the President's Luncheon for Retired Faculty and Staff, President Percy assured us that Portland and Portland State will continue to come back

from some of the issues we have faced over the past few years. But he added that it is likely that the city and the university will not continue to do things exactly as they have in the past. Over the months, I have often thought about President Percy's words and how almost every organization survives by continuing to evolve and grow.

Now, as I think about what I am thankful for, and RAPS jumps to the top of the list, I am again reminded of President Percy's words.

Are there changes you would like to see in RAPS? Drop us an email and share your thoughts.

I wonder if the RAPS Board is doing all it can for our membership. Are there changes you would like to see in RAPS? Are there things we could do to better serve you? Are there other programs you would like to see RAPS provide? Are there ways we might increase the membership of RAPS? The RAPS Board would like to hear from you about how we can improve. Please drop us an email at rapsmail@pdx.edu and share your thoughts with us.

—Janine Allen

Upcoming RAPS events

DECEMBER

» THURSDAY, DECEMBER 7

Annual Holiday Brunch, Augustana Lutheran Church, 2710 NE 14th Avenue, Portland. Doors open 10:30 a.m. (See story on page 1.)

JANUARY

» THURSDAY, JANUARY 18

"Divest Oregon: Confronting Climate Risks to PERS and the Planet," presentation by Rory Cowal, instructor in

the PSU School of Music and volunteer with Divest Oregon, a statewide grassroots coalition of individuals and organizations seeking to have the Oregon State Treasury divest pension funds of fossil fuel holdings. 333 SMSU.

FEBRUARY

» THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 15

"Two Terroirists from Tualatin," a joint presentation by wine experts Michael Albery and Scott Burns. 333 SMSU.

AN OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE THROUGH THE RAPS ROBERT VOGELSANG SCHOLARSHIP

OVER THE PAST YEARS, the RAPS Robert Vogelsang Scholarship has made a difference at PSU. Together, we have:

- ▶ Enabled a student faced with dropping out of school to complete a master's degree, which led to work on a hospital neurology team addressing the needs of 60- to 80-year-olds.
- ▶ Helped graduate into the social work field a student now addressing aging and end-of-life-care.
- ▶ Assisted a student who, 12 years after completing her graduate degree, is an associate professor of gerontology at Western Oregon University.
- ▶ Supported the aspirations of a student who wanted to help seniors navigate the complex healthcare system.

These are just a few examples of the many ways the RAPS Vogelsang Scholarship has made a difference in the lives and careers of students studying and working in aging and health.

Today we're asking you to consider a gift to the RAPS Vogelsang Scholarship. We on the Scholarship Committee can guarantee you will feel the particular satisfaction that comes from helping a PSU student.

Great news: If you make your gift by December 31, it will be matched! To encourage gifts, a group of RAPS members have agreed to match all gifts dollar-for-dollar up to a total of \$5,000.

To make your gift by check:

PSU Foundation
P.O. Box 243
Portland, OR 97207-0243

Please make checks payable to the Portland State University Foundation and include "RAPS Scholarship Payout" in the memo line.

To make your gift online visit: giving.psuf.org/raps-scholarship

Thank you!

—*Sherwin Davidson, Chair, RAPS Scholarship Committee*

P.S. Remember that the match provided by your fellow RAPS members will double the amount of your donation to the scholarship!

New manager takes helm of RAPS office

THE NEW MANAGER of the RAPS office is a graduate student in computer science who hails from Tirupati, a city in southern India.



Chethana Muppalam was named to the post last month after a lengthy search that involved a number of candidates. “The search process was exceptionally smooth,” said Muppalam, “and I enjoyed every step of it. Janine (Allen) and Bruce (Stern) were welcoming and made me feel

like family.”

She was drawn to the position because managing events and overseeing clerical activities are “closely aligned” with her past experience and interests. She’s looking forward to

meeting RAPS members and benefiting from their knowledge and experience.

After completing her undergraduate degree in computer science, Muppalam worked for more than four years as a software engineer in India. Portland State’s coursework in artificial intelligence and machine learning attracted her to the university. After completing her graduate degree, she hopes to work as an AI/ML engineer.

“My hope is to contribute to and build advancements in artificial intelligence applications,” she said.

Although she hasn’t yet set firm office hours, Muppalam will be available via email at rapsmail@pdx.edu.

Muppalam replaces Eben Yemoh, who completed a master’s degree at PSU and now works with Legacy Health.

RAPS Group Reports

Book Group

THE BOOK GROUP had a lively discussion at our Zoom meeting on November 21. We exchanged our views on *The Music of the Bees*, by Eileen Garvin, a novel that considers the intersecting lives of three complex and engaging characters who focus their attention on supporting the health and productivity of a beekeeper’s colony of hives.

Set in the Hood River area of Oregon, the middle-aged woman who owns the farm that is home for the bees, the teenaged boy who serves as her major beekeeper despite his need to use a wheelchair, and her young adult handyman employee who is trying to restart his complicated life captured our attention and empathy. We recognized the pain that affected the lives of the major characters, but also were clear that each life was enriched by the support and strength they received through their relationships. The book also focused on timely issues such as immigration, support for people with disabilities, and the need to organize to ensure environmental protection.

The December meeting of the Book Group will discuss the many challenges set forth in *The Uninhabitable Earth: Life After Warming*, by David Wallace-Wells. This succinct but compelling book sets forth the accelerating climate changes in our planet that are resulting in global warming and notable temperature increases, flooding, polluted air and seas, and armed conflict. It also recognizes some hopeful actions that are taking place to counter these changes that should provide key points of discussion. Our final meeting of 2023 will be on Tuesday, December 19, at 1:30 p.m. by Zoom.

The RAPS Book Group meets on the third Tuesday of the month. All RAPS members are welcome to attend our meetings, which are currently held using Zoom.

—Eileen Brennan

Bridge Group

THE BRIDGE GROUP needs additional players.

Why would anyone join our group? Our players are friendly and enjoy the social aspect of playing bridge together. We benefit from the mental challenges (e.g., remembering what the trump suit is, tracking which important cards have already been played, figuring out whose turn it is to deal the next hand, and more).

I would like to hear from any interested RAPS members, or others you know who might want to play in our group. The RAPS Bridge Group does not require RAPS membership. Your friends and relatives would be welcome to join us. Please rattle your social and family networks to see if you might be able to shake loose a bridge player or two.

Please contact Steve Brennan, 503-889-0146. My email address is: the.steve.brennan@gmail.com.

—Steve Brennan

Hiking Group

ON NOVEMBER 14, four hikers enjoyed a quiet autumnal walk in Newell Creek Canyon Nature Park in Oregon City.

We lucked out with no rain and no wind under a gray sky. We examined a weird skinny white fungus growing out of the ground (*Clavaria fragilis*) and pooled our knowledge of ferns and trees.

After two hours in the woods, we replenished with burgers and shakes at Mike’s Drive-In in Oregon City.

—Tom Hard