Sandra Freels to Speak on Current Events in Russia and Ukraine At May 15 Meeting

Sandra Freels, (BA Indiana University 1969, PhD Stanford University 1976), has taught Russian language, literature, and cultural history at Portland State University since 1981. She is the author of three textbooks: Focus on Russian (1991, 1996), The Golden Age (1996) and Russian in Use, (2007). She served as chair of the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures from 2000 to 2010, and is now the Director of the PSU Russian Flagship Center.

The meeting will be in Room 333, SMSU. A light lunch will be available at noon. Professor Freels will speak at 1:00pm. Following her talk, we will have our traditional spring Ice Cream Social, featuring ice cream and toppings from The Party Scoop. Please be sure to join us for this event.
Annual RAPS Awards
Presented at President’s Luncheon

Dawn White and David Krug were honored for their outstanding post-retirement achievements at the 2014 President’s Annual Luncheon for retired faculty and staff. Steve Brannan nominated and presented the RAPS Award to Dawn White, highlighting her outstanding achievements as a retiree in bringing comfort to children with cancer and their parents. Larry Sawyer nominated David Krug and arranged for Joel Arick to present David’s award, highlighting his outstanding achievements as a retiree in enriching the lives of individuals with autism.

The RAPS Scholarship

The RAPS Scholarship is awarded to students who are pursuing studies in gerontology. To contribute, please send a check payable to the PSU Foundation/RAPS Scholarship to PSU-RAPS, P. O. Box 751, Portland, OR 97201-0751. There is a link to a form for scholarship contributions on the RAPS website www.pdx.edu/raps under the “Scholarship” tab. To contribute by credit card, please contact Alle Powers, the RAPS office manager, at 503-725-3447, or raps@pdx.edu. An addressed envelope is included with this mailing for your convenience.

RAPS Scholarship Contributions

The Robert W. Vogelsang Memorial Wine Raffle
Past Tense

Vanport Extension Center Becomes Portland State College

Seated at Governor Paul Patterson’s right is John Cramer, the first President of Portland State College and to his far right is Stephen Epler, at the signing of legislation on February 14, 1955 making Portland State a four-year college.

It took nine years for Vanport Extension Center (VEC) to become Portland State College. There were many political obstacles along the way. In fact, Paul Packer, chancellor of the Oregon State System of Higher Education suggested closing VEC shortly after the 1948 Vanport flood. However, Edgar Smith, state board president, foresaw continued veteran growth and promised to keep the two-year school in operation as long as enrollment remained above 1,000 students. The original intent was for VEC to be a temporary institution to educate returning veterans.

While there was much opposition to continuing the school, many strong advocates, including students, faculty, alumni, community members, Portland newspapers, and politicians, fought for its survival. In 1946, the school newspaper Vet’s Extended published a letter written by student council member Richard Miegs proposing that VEC become a permanent institution. Early on, Richard Neuberger, journalist and Oregon state senator advocated for a four-year college in Portland. John Hakanson, a former Vanport student, led a successful campaign to get legislation passed to establish a permanent two-year junior college in Portland and purchase a building. Governor Douglas McKay authorized the purchase of the old Lincoln High School in the Park Blocks in 1949. Classes began there in 1952 after remodeling, with the school named Portland State Extension Center, although students prematurely began calling it Portland State College.

In 1952, the Oregon Board of Higher Education commissioned a consultant’s report that recommended expanded teacher training, including the establishment of a program at Portland State to address the upcoming critical shortage of teachers. This prompted Stephen Epler to write a proposal for a four-year college in Portland, and two legislative sessions later, Governor Paul Patterson signed House Bill 27 granting four-year college status to Portland State on February 14, 1955. Students were elated that they could now obtain a bachelor’s degree at Portland State College, rather than transfer to other higher education institutions.

--Mary Brannan
The RAPS Book Club will meet at 1:30 on Tuesday, May 20, hosted by Maxine Thomas at 6535 SW Canyon Court in Portland. Contact her at thomasm@pdx.edu or 503-291-1279 to RSVP and for directions. We will discuss The Orphan Train by Christina Baker Kline which is described on the cover as follows:

Between 1854 and 1929, so-called orphan trains ran regularly from the cities of the East Coast to the farmlands of the Midwest, carrying thousands of abandoned children whose fates would be determined by luck or chance. Would they be adopted by a kind and loving family, or would they face a childhood and adolescence of hard labor and servitude?

As a young Irish immigrant, Vivian Daly was one such child, sent by rail from New York City to an uncertain future a world away. Returning east later in life, Vivian leads a quiet, peaceful existence on the coast of Maine, the memories of her upbringing rendered a hazy blur. But in her attic, hidden in trunks, are vestiges of a turbulent past.

Seventeen-year-old Molly Ayer knows that a community-service position helping an elderly widow clean out her attic is the only thing keeping her out of juvenile hall. But as Molly helps Vivian sort through her keepsakes and possessions, she discovers that she and Vivian aren't as different as they appear. A Penobscot Indian who has spent her youth in and out of foster homes, Molly is also an outsider being raised by strangers, and she, too, has unanswered questions about the past.

Moving between contemporary Maine and Depression-era Minnesota, Orphan Train is a powerful tale of upheaval and resilience, second chances, and unexpected friendship.

Looking ahead, we will discuss The Goldfinch by Donna Tartt in June.

--Mary Brannan

The RAPS Bridge Group will meet on May 6 in the conference room of Friendly House's Anderson Building. This building is on the north side of NW Savier Street, around the corner from the 26th and Thurman main entrance of Friendly House. Play begins at 1:00pm and continues to about 4:30pm. The June meeting will be on June 3. If you wish to play, please contact me by the Friday prior to the meeting at 503-646-6297, or by email at the.steve.brennan@gmail.com.

--Steve Brennan

The RAPS Hiking Group hiked the Canyon Trail in Silver Falls State Park on April 11. Maxine Thomas invited a new hiker to our group. We welcome Deve Swaim. She retired from the Graduate School of Education last July and has hiked Silver Falls many times. She is enjoying her free first year membership in RAPS. The weather was great.

On May 9, we will take our second hike this year in the Columbia Gorge. It is a historic wagon road used in the early 1900s to haul apples, and is located in Washington across from Hood River. There is a 1340 foot elevation gain and the total distance is seven miles out and back. The Friends of the Columbia Gorge lists it as moderate difficulty. The Friends of the Columbia Gorge hiked it April 24, and there was already a waiting list on April 20. We will meet at the SE corner of the Gateway Transit Center parking structure at 9:00am to form carpools. Bring a sack lunch; we will eat on the trail. This will be a good conditioning hike for the Saddle Mountain hike in June. Confirm with Larry Sawyer (larry_sawyer@comcast.net) or 503-771-1616 by Thursday May 8.

--Larry Sawyer