PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

It’s hard to believe that I am writing another President’s Message. This happens once a month and yet it seems as though I just drafted my January column last week! Time passes by so rapidly, which probably means that life is interesting and fun—not certainly not boring!

In this new year of 2006, we are continuing to focus on our initiative to preserve and celebrate PSU’s history. Steve Brannan is re-convening the ad hoc History Preservation Committee, which is composed of several RAPS board members, along with other faculty and staff who provide university-wide representation. This committee’s current mission is to determine how to proceed with efforts to preserve and utilize written and visual materials and artifacts and to include various campus units in this endeavor. We think that RAPS members have great institutional memory and can be valuable resources to work and consult with faculty and staff regarding historical preservation in their academic and nonacademic units. Some of you RAPS members are already involved with such activities, and we anticipate asking for other volunteer retirees in the near future to help us with this project.

Along these same lines, we are continuing to work on our other initiative, the PSU Pictorial History Book project. We think such a book is needed and would truly complement the other, more scholarly PSU book by Gordon Dodds, The College that Would Not Die. We have recently formed an ad hoc advisory committee for planning and implementing this project. This is a collaborative committee composed of RAPS members, a representative from the Alumni Association, the director of the PSU Book Store, and other key campus personnel. Additionally, we have opened a PSU Foundation account to use for collection and disbursement of funds that will be procured through fundraising to finance the project. We view this project as a way to honor and celebrate Portland State University’s history.

We have launched our first collaboration with OASIS, a non-profit national education organization for mature adults. I know that some of you already know about OASIS and participate in its activities. For the first time, OASIS and RAPS are co-sponsoring a discussion group following each of the “Great Decisions 2006” Lectures held at PSU. Robin Costic, the Director of OASIS, and I hope that this will become an annual program for our two organizations.

In looking ahead to our annual President’s Luncheon (mark your calendars for April 20th), you will find with this a nomination form for our annual RAPS awards to be presented at this event. I encourage you

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to nominate colleagues whose accomplishments as a retiree should be recognized. This is a wonderful way to honor deserving individuals. Please send in your nomination.

We had a very interesting program event in January on the topic of sustainability. The February program promises to be excellent too with an expert policeman talking with us about identity theft. Please consider bringing two food items to donate to the PSU Food Drive for the Oregon Food Bank. Needed food items include canned foods (meats, vegetables, fruits); canned and boxed meals (soup, chili, stew, macaroni & cheese, etc); peanut butter (in plastic jars); pasta, rice, and cereal; powdered milk, and fruit juices (boxed, canned or plastic). Non-food items such as toothbrushes, diapers, soap, and other personal items are needed as well. No glass packaged foods, perishable or homemade foods can be accepted.

Do you know any PSU faculty or staff retiree or a retiree from another institution of higher education who is not a member of RAPS? If so, please tell them about us, suggest that they look at our website (www.raps.pdx.edu) to find information about us, and/or forward contact information to us so that we can send them a brochure and membership application. Sometimes it seems that we are a well-kept secret, especially from retired staff members.

That’s all until next month which will come oh so quickly.

Mary Brannan

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

If you are about to retire or have already retired and have not become a member of Oregon PERS Retirees, Inc., you are missing an opportunity to have an organization look out for your interests as a PERS retiree.

OPRI was launched in 1991 by a trio of PERS retirees who objected to the state’s decision to tax pensions of PERS retirees. The three men were Bill Holtsclaw; a retired state forester, Chuck Fredrickson, a retired highway construction engineer; and Jack Sollis, a retired assistant attorney general. After the creation of OPRI, by-laws were adopted and four more board members were added. The additional members were Ted deLooze, another retired Oregon State Assistant Attorney General; Neal Fisher, an executive department official; Ed Schroeder, another retired Oregon state forester; and Arno Denecke, a retired Chief Justice of the Oregon Supreme Court.

By August of 1991 OPRI had grown to 2,500 members -- in December the number was 3,700. By the end of 1992 OPRI membership hit 7,000 then leveled out at 8,500 in 1993. Since 1993 membership has remained around 8,500.

In the intervening years, members have created a PAC with their contributions and a litigation fund that has fought two successful legal battles over legislative changes in PERS. OPRI membership dues started out at five dollars a year in 1991 and remain five dollars a year today!

The current chair of OPRI is Kathleen Beaufait, retired deputy legislative counsel. If you want to learn more about the group and its activities, check out the OPRI web site at www.opri.org. You also can find a membership application at that site.

Vinita Howard, Editor, OPRI Newsletter

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

The Election Committee is soliciting nominees for the following RAPS Board Officers for the year 2006-2007

1. President-Elect
2. Treasurer
3. Secretary

Please send your nominations to our Office Manager--Darshana Patel E-mail raps@pdx.edu, Phone 503-725-3447.
RAPS ACTIVITIES

RAPS BOOK CLUB
On January 17th, we discussed *Becoming Madame Mao*, by Anchee Min. Anchee Min was born in Shanghai in 1957 and, at the age of seventeen, was sent to a labor collective. There she was recruited to Madame Mao’s Shanghai Film Studio. These experiences led her to write this historical novel about Jiang Ching (Madame Mao) who was married four times, the last time to Mao Tse-tung from 1939 until his death in 1976. Early in their marriage, she functioned as his wife and hostess and did not participate in political activities. During the 1960s, however, she became increasingly politically active and powerful. Her detractors labeled her the “white-boned demon” because of her ruthlessness. In this book, she is portrayed as a woman who loved her husband Mao but who wanted to be recognized and appreciated. The author uses an interesting narrative technique as she switches between writing in the first person as Madame Mao and in the third person as an observer. We concluded that the book provided some insight into China during the life of Jiang Ching (alias Unhe, Lan Ping, Madame Mao) from 1919-1991, and we recommend it.

Our February selection is *Eventide* written by Kent Haruf, who was the author of *Plainsong*. Refer to the January issue of the *RAPS Sheet* for a description. We will meet at Willamette View, the residence of Irene Place on Tuesday, February 21st at 1:30. The address is 13021 SE River Road in Portland. Contact Irene by e-mail (Irene@wvresident.org) or call her at 503-652-6528 to RSVP and for directions.

Our March selection is *The Bookseller of Kabul*, nonfiction, written by Asne Seierstad. We will meet at the home of Mary Brannan on March 21st for discussion of this book. The book selected for April is the fiction novel *March* written by Geraldine Brooks.

We’re reading some good books.   

Mary Brannan

RAPS HIKERS
Five RAPS hikers walked in the Tualatin Nature Park outside of Beaverton. The rain held off, but there were some muddy sections on the unpaved trails that had to be avoided. We visited the interpretive center in the park and planned the next three months hikes. We finished with lunch at a local café.

The next three hikes held on the fourth Friday of the month are as follows:

February 24th: Larry Sawyer will lead a Washington Park to Arlington Heights loop. This is walk 4 in the *Portland Hill Walks* book. This is the same hike the author, Laura Foster, led as part of PSU Weekend. The hills are not steep, and landmarks are noted in the book. We will meet at the old entrance to Washington Park located at NW 24th place and W Burnside at 9:30 am. There is street parking only. It is highly recommended you take the Burnside #20 bus, which has an eastbound stop right at the start of the hike. The hike is either 3.5 or 4.5 miles, depending on the loop options. RSVP to Larry Sawyer 503-771-1616 or larry_sawyer@comcast.net by Thursday, February 23rd.

March 24th: Bob Tufts will lead a hike on the Old Columbia River Highway east from Bonneville Dam. We will carpool. More details will follow next month.

April 28th: Maxine Thomas will lead a hike from the Carnival Restaurant to Council Crest. This hike will have some steep elevation gains. More details will follow next month.

Larry Sawyer
RAPS EVENTS

MARK YOUR CALENDARS
Be sure not to miss the following events sponsored by RAPS. Detailed information about our February program is in this newsletter. Information for other events will be forthcoming.

Thursday, February 16, 2006
SMC 327, 1:00 p.m.
Featured Speaker: Detective Bill Johnston
Topic: Identity Theft

Wednesday, March 22, 2006
SMC 236, 12 Noon
Lunch Potluck
Featured Speaker: Professor Ladis Kristof
Topic: “My Journey to America”

JANUARY RAPS EVENT - SUSTAINABILITY

On January 5th at 1:00 p.m. Professor David Ervin ably pinch-hit for Provost Roy Koch, who was called away to a system-wide provosts’ meeting. David is a professor of Environmental Studies and Coordinator of Academic Sustainability Programs at Portland State University.

So what is meant by sustainability? Sustainability is a promise that present and future generations will have the opportunity to enjoy a productive and rewarding life because we emphasize stewardship of the environment in our daily actions and future plans. As a result, our actions do not destroy the resource bases and environmental quality of which our children and their children might like to take advantage.

David discussed the national and international sustainability movements and what is being done now at Portland State University. At PSU, we are focusing on urban planning and land use and are lending our expertise to the Chinese Ministry of Land and Resources. Secondly, our campus buildings are incorporating green building techniques such as recycling rainwater for toilets and irrigation in Epler Hall.

PSU won two prestigious City of Portland BEST awards recently for increasing the use of alternative transportation among students, staff, and faculty, and for storm-water management at Epler Hall and at the LEED Silver Broadway Building.

From an educational perspective, PSU offers a professional certificate in sustainability that attracts students from business- and public-sector organizations. The focus is hands-on training on how to apply sustainability principles to the real world.

A few copies of David Ervin’s handout are available. Call Darshana Patel at 503-725-3447 if you would like her to send you a copy.

Bruce Stern

RAPS has been asked to participate in the Governor’s Food Drive for PSU – which benefits the Oregon Food Bank. Please consider bringing one or two items to this meeting. Canned and boxed food, fruit juices, and personal care products (soap, toothbrushes, etc.) are valued. Glass-packaged foods, perishable, or homemade foods cannot be accepted.

Bruce Stern
OUR ACTIVE RETIREES - JOHN DASH, PROFESSOR EMERITUS OF PHYSICS

Many of us remember the news story that broke in 1989 when two professors at the University of Utah, Fleischmann and Pons, announced that they had successfully achieved cold fusion, that is, the fusion of hydrogen atoms into helium, the process that provides the energy of the sun. Since the early 1950s, scientists at major American universities had been trying to reproduce fusion and thus to make available an effectively infinite supply of non-polluting energy, but every earlier attempt had involved extremely high temperatures, so high, in fact, that a primary problem is how to contain the process. Thus the possibility of cold fusion was greeted first with excitement, the governor of Utah giving $5 million to help fund the project, and then with skepticism and even derision, when other scientists failed to duplicate Fleischmann and Pons’s experiment.

Professor Makoto Takeo, then head of the PSU Physics department, asked John Dash to look into Fleischmann and Pons’s experiments. The impression was widespread that the Utah Professor were charlatans and had claimed to have achieved something like a perpetual motion machine, but Fleischmann, at least, is a distinguished scientist, possessing, among other honors, a Fellowship in the Royal Society of England, the world’s oldest scientific body.

The physics of cold fusion is roughly as follows. As many of us remember from high school science classes, electrolysis of water separates it into its components of oxygen and hydrogen. Fleischmann and Pons used palladium as the cathode in electrolysis to attract the hydrogen, and, in Dash’s words, palladium “soaks up hydrogen like a sponge.” When hydrogen is packed into a palladium crystal, if fuses into helium and releases energy.

John Dash acquired a small piece of palladium and, with the assistance of a graduate student, used it as the cathode in electrolysis. He was intrigued to see that the palladium crinkled oddly, and he wanted to find out why. He has been working on the issue of cold fusion ever since. He has developed his own process involving titanium, a much cheaper metal than palladium. While Fleischmann and Pons’s process produced a reaction in weeks, Dash is able to get a reaction in hours.

Although he went into phased retirement in 1995 and taught his last class in 1997, Dash continues his experimentation. A wealthy individual, who is interested in alternative sources of energy but wishes to remain anonymous, has funded Dash’s research to the tune of a five hundred thousand dollars. He has read papers and attended conferences in many countries, Japan, France, Italy, Russia, Belarus, and others. Seven students working with him have earned M.S. degrees, and two a PhD.

He has been able to increase the energy production by a factor of ten, but Dash acknowledges that it would require an increase by a factor of hundreds or thousands to produce a practical source of energy. As he says, fusion has yet to light a light bulb. Still, as we all know, the potential practical results of scientific research are rarely known in the early discovery stages. In the meantime, he is engaged in a long legal tussle with the Patent Office and the courts to patent the process that he has invented. To read some of his work, you can log on to www.lenr-canr.org, a web site devoted to cold fusion.

John keeps physically fit. I used to see him regularly in the locker room of the PSU gym, he off to swim and I to run. He still swims (my running days, alas, are over), and enjoys Nordic skiing.

John Cooper
As I mentioned in the previous article, last November I attended the international conference of Friendship Force in São Paulo, Brazil. One reason I wanted to attend was to meet and get to know members from throughout the world. The second reason for interest in Brazil is that I publish some woodwind compositions from three composers in São Paulo and one in Curitiba, and this would be a perfect opportunity to meet them in person.

One of this quartet of composers, Claudio deFreitas, plays contrabassoon in the São Paulo Symphony (the best of the five orchestras in that city). Claudio picked us up from our hotel one evening to take us to a typical Brazilian restaurant where steaks cover the entire dinner plate. This is no place for a vegetarian, but we carnivores thoroughly enjoyed it.

The next morning he took us to a rehearsal of his orchestra. Shostakovich’s Seventh Symphony (Leningrad) was being rehearsed with an American conductor. The orchestra was brilliant, as was the conductor. What a pity that this first-class orchestra doesn’t record on any label available to us in the US. We really have no idea what wonderful music is being made and written anywhere south of the Rio Grande.

We had a chance to meet him and the other bassoonists, because Kurt Mossman, who manufactures fine bassoons in Germany, was showing his latest models at the concert hall. I had a chance to get reacquainted with him as well as his representative for all of Latin America, a man who recently retired from the SODRE orchestra in Montevideo, Uruguay. I asked this man if he was playing in that orchestra in 1964. When he said he was, indeed, I told him that he and the other bassoonists took me to breakfast one morning and gave me a recording of their orchestra. How small the music world really is!

The following day I met with yet another composer, Júlio Medaglia. He took us to his lovely home where his wife prepared a wonderful meal and where I found out what a great force he is in the Brazilian musical life. Not only is he a first-rate composer, but also he conducts one of the five orchestras in São Paulo, he is organizing a second orchestra in Brasilia, and he founded the orchestra in the state of Amazónas (Manaus). He gave me a video of himself conducting an opera performance of Brazilian composer, Carlos Gomes’ “O Guaraní” (the Guaraní Indian) with the Sofia, Bulgaria, national opera. Wow, what singers they have in that country!

Mediglia also showed me a book he had written on the Tropicalia movement of popular Brazilian music of the ‘60s. This movement was spearheaded by such singers/composers as Baden Powell, Gilberto Gil, João Gilberto, Antonio Carlos Jobim, Gal Costa and Americans such as Stan Getz and Dizzy Gillespie (through whom it morphed into be-bop in the US). Then he played us a portion of his Broadway-type musical based on Jorge Amado’s “Dona Flor and Her Two Husbands.” That one I’d like to see live. Over another glass of wine, he showed a video tape of the Berlin Philharmonic Woodwind Quintet performing one of his compositions. I congratulated him on his ability to teach German musicians how to play Brazilian music. The two styles are about as far apart as is possible. Then I was given more of his woodwind music to publish.

Unfortunately, the other São Paulo composer is in poor health and was unable to meet with us. I now have his woodwind quintet completed so will have to mail it to him. The fourth Brazilian composer, from Curitiba, was working in another state at the time we were in his city, so we had no opportunity to meet him.

Now I’d better get busy publishing a backlog of bassoon quartets from Costa Rica.

Gordon Solie
In Memoriam: Frederick J. Cox, January 27, 1914 – December 8, 2005

Frederick John Cox, Emeritus Professor of History, Middle East Studies Center founder, and first Dean of Graduate Studies and Research, succumbed to heart failure in Gleneden Beach on December 8, 2005. Professor Cox joined the University faculty in 1957 and retired in 1980.

Dr. Cox was born January 27, 1914, in Tacoma, Washington, where he attended public schools. At the University of California (Berkeley) he earned BA (1938), MA (1939) and Phd. (1947) degrees. During World War II, he served as a combat intelligence officer on the aircraft carrier *Hornet*. He participated in the active naval reserve until 1970, when he retired as a commander.

In 1946, Fred returned to Berkeley to complete his doctoral degree, and in the following year accepted a position at the University of Alabama. A Fulbright Research Professorship at Fuad Ier University in Cairo (1950-1952) enabled him to be the first American researcher to work in the Abdin Palace Archives. Early on, Dr. Cox had sensed an urgent need to increase the level of our knowledge of Islamic civilization, and he developed a Middle East studies specialty when that field was little emphasized in higher education.

In 1957, Professor Cox came to PSU as professor and head of the five-member history section—a unit within the Social Science Division—that offered mostly lower division courses in heavily populated, daytime and evening classes. Planning for a departmental major was already underway, and, to that end, he mobilized willing colleagues and recruited additional faculty. Concurrently, he tirelessly sought to upgrade minimal faculty instructional support facilities, notably a pitifully small library collection and totally inadequate office space. Perceiving challenges as opportunities, Fred energetically sought to lay the foundations for a comprehensive instructional and research university on the Park Blocks.

In 1958, Congress enacted the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) that sponsored inter-disciplinary “language and area study centers” providing instruction in critical, rarely-taught, languages: Arabic, Farsi and Turkish. Throughout the higher education community, innovative undergraduate interdisciplinary programs often met resistance because heretofore universities generally had offered such training only at the graduate level. Not a few liberal arts educators—and occasionally funding agencies—characterized the “language and area studies” concept as “premature specialization.”

Dr. Cox, however, had determined that this young institution’s curricular development afforded a unique opportunity to establish innovative baccalaureate programs with special appeal for NDEA funding. To that end, in January 1959 the University’s central administration assigned him to chair an ad hoc committee to organize a Middle East Studies Center (MESC). A year later, the U.S. Office of Education granted partial support for Arabic language courses, and of twelve funded centers, Portland State’s was the only undergraduate program. During the ensuing years Professor Cox headed and expanded the MESC, utilizing faculty representing appropriate disciplines. Eventually, the University absorbed the center as a permanent academic entity.

At the outset the MESC attracted a global reputation for educational outreach, which ultimately led to widespread collaboration with educational institutions and consortia. It has gathered substantial federally-funded library resources. Fellowship support has enabled many graduates to pursue advanced degrees at PSU and other major universities, thereby affording entrée to public and private sector careers. Thus, through the MESC, PSU has achieved a significant international reputation for instruction dealing with an area of major national concern.

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Indeed, this successful academic enterprise—which has paralleled PSU’s emergence as a major university—is a lasting testimonial to Fred’s energy, foresight, and commanding intellect.

In fall the term of 1964 President Branford P. Millar, in recognition of Professor Cox’s organizing accomplishments, appointed him as PSU’s first of Dean of Graduate Studies and Research. This assignment charged him to establish necessary administration, program planning, and policy development to oversee burgeoning graduate training in Education and Social Work, as well as preparations for forthcoming liberal arts and sciences advanced degree offerings. Heretofore, basic graduate program supervision had been carried out through somewhat unwieldy interactive functions of the Dean of Faculty (forerunner of the Provost), cognizant deans, and the “Graduate Council,” a faculty governance unit. Because few formal procedures existed, Fred set himself to the task of creating entirely new structures. Indeed, on a Sunday afternoon prior to opening the Graduate Office to serve its clientele, Dean Cox and his administrative assistant devised necessary guidelines, procedures, and startup forms where none had existed.

While Dean Cox oversaw graduate programs from 1964 to 1969, planning moved forward for today’s “cutting edge” inter-disciplinary doctoral programs in Urban Studies, Environmental Sciences and Systems Science. On February 14, 1969, Governor Tom McCall signed the bill creating “Portland State University,” and in July, 1969, Fred resumed full time professorial duties and management of the Middle East Studies Center. There is no doubt that his guidance had contributed vastly to PSU’s emergence as a comprehensive university.

Throughout his distinguished career he regularly taught classes, maintaining a reputation as an exciting, inspirational classroom teacher. He directed master’s theses and willingly taught lower division survey classes, which he considered a means of attracting good students to upper division and graduate courses.

Fred actively participated in many scholarly organizations. Over the years he delivered numerous academic addresses and published at least two dozen peer-reviewed professional journal articles. After retirement in 1980 he and a departmental colleague co-authored two volumes dealing with the Soviet Union’s historical role in the Middle East.

Professor Cox displayed an engaging personality and pursued widely varying interests. He ably served on many University-wide committees, but inter-collegiate athletics especially interested him, perhaps because Fred—not a tall man—had lettered in varsity basketball at the University of California. An avid golfer, Fred held memberships in three golfing clubs. He amassed an enormous collection of Lionel trains and often attended exhibitions. His collection of Egyptian postage stamps would overwhelm any philatelist. Always enthusiastic about campus activities, he actively participated in Phi Sigma Kappa fraternity and the national history honorary, Phi Alpha Theta. At PSU Fred enjoyed a wide circle of friends and those of us whom he nurtured in our academic careers will forever be indebted to him.

His wife, the former Barbara Eames; son, Stephen; daughter, Susan McComas; and grandchildren, Hayden, Erin, Palmer and Derby, survive him. Fred always had compassion for hungry children and a fitting memorial in his name could be sent to the Lincoln County Food Bank, P.O. Box 1260, Lincoln City, Oregon 97367.

Victor C. Dahl