PSU Weekend set for Nov. 7-9

Frances Mayes, New York Times best-selling author of *Under the Tuscan Sun*, is coming to PSU in November as the keynote speaker for PSU's annual community educational event, PSU Weekend. Mayes, who will speak at PSU Weekend's noon luncheon on Saturday, November 8, 2003, is the highlight of the event which also features lectures on a variety of topics, musical performances, educational tours and a football game.

Seating for the Mayes lunch, to be held in Portland State's Smith Memorial Student Union (1825 SW Broadway, third floor), is $30; lecture-only admission is $12; and $5 for students. A reception will be held on Friday, November 7, and will give guests the opportunity to meet Mayes in person.

Tickets for the reception, which include entrance to Mayes' luncheon talk the next day, cost $100. Members of the public who would like to attend either event should call 503-725-4949 for reservations. Media should email or fax requests to Trish Turchiarolo-Vanoni at vanoni@pdx.edu or 503-725-5074.

*Under the Tuscan Sun* has been on the New York Times best-seller for 124 weeks and is currently ranked second. Also premiering Friday, September 26, as a major motion picture starring Diane Lane, *Under the Tuscan Sun* is a memoir about taking chances, living in Italy, renovating an old villa, the pleasures of food and the “voluptuousness of Italian life."

Mayes, formerly Chair of the Creative Writing Department at San Francisco State University, is (Continued on Page 3)
Gordon Dodds, PSU historian, archivist, dies

By Victor C. Dahl,
Emeritus Professor of History

Family members and friends attended a “Celebration of Life” honoring Gordon B. Dodds Emeritus Professor of History and PSU Historian and Archivist, on September 6, 2003, at Grace Memorial Episcopal Church in Portland. Professor Dodds died August 29, 2003, from a progressive lung disease. The Oregonian’s full-scale obituary is at www.opusnet.com/gordon.

Professor Dodds, born in Milwaukee, earned a bachelor’s degree (1954) at Harvard University and master’s (1955) and doctoral (1958) degrees at the University of Wisconsin, which maintains a rich tradition for Western frontier research. While teaching at Knox College in Illinois, he completed several Pacific Northwest studies before coming to PSU in 1966.

A prolific research record, including production of ten books and numerous journal articles, earned him international recognition as a foremost, influential Pacific Northwest historian. A landmark publication based upon almost legendary in depth research, The College that Would not Die: The First Fifty Years of Portland State University, 1946-1996 (2000), contributed substantially to understanding our institutional struggle for existence.

Instructional excellence, a hardworking role on university governance committees — especially involving scholarly standards and faculty welfare — generated campus-wide gratitude and respect. We thank Gordon for his memorable assistance to the PSU support group, Friends of History; the history students honorary, Phi Alpha Theta, and, to REPPs (now known as RAPS).

Heartfelt condolences go to his wife, Linda, and children, Paul Dodds, Ruth Allen and Jennifer Weisbrod. Memorial contributions should be made to the Friends of History at PSU’s Department of History or to the Grace Memorial Episcopal Church Friday Community Supper Program, 1535 Northeast 17th Avenue, Portland OR 97232.

Please note also.

Audrey O. Bushnell died July 25 at the age of 87. She was a graduate of Girls Poly High School in Portland, and she was employed in the Registrar’s Office for over twenty years.

A detailed obituary appeared in The Oregonian. Remembrances may be made to the family.

Barry Reilly Jones died August 24 at age 56. Mr. Jones was born March 3, 1947, in Portland. He was a graduate of Cleveland High School in Portland, and was a kitchen aide at Portland State University and Oregon Health & Sciences University for 30 years.

Remembrances may be made to the Oregon Food Bank.

Raphael Earl “Ray” Maiers died July 23 at the age of 89. He was born August 30, 1913, in Grand Forks, N.D. He graduated from the University of North Dakota and was a civil engineer. In the 1950s, he taught chemistry at PSU.

Remembrances may be made to any charity.

Bits . . . and . . . Pieces

Schley 90th Birthday Party

The family of Helen Schley, senior instructor emerita of English as a Second language, invite all friends and members of RAPS to Schley’s 90th birthday party.

The party will be held from 3–5 pm, Sunday, October 12 at the Hollywood Senior Center at 40th and Sandy Boulevard.

Gym Locker Notices

A locker fee of $25 per quarter will be assessed for all non-student locker users in the Peter W. Stott Center Gymnasium. The notice announcing this fee was received by some, but not all, of the RAPS members making use of the gym facilities.

A protest against the fee was discussed in the September Board meeting, but the outlook for rescinding it was not good. All fee increases of this nature must be approved at the OSSHE Board level.

Nominations for RAPS Outstanding Retiree Award

Due March 1, 2004
It’s Not Too Early
To Start Thinking
The President’s Column

RAPS mission and mission statement re-examined

By Maxine Thomas,
RAPS President

RAPS Mission
Promote continued collegiality and communication among retired personnel and provide a vehicle for them to remain in contact with each other and support the goals and endeavors of their University.

As the new president of RAPS, I re-read the above words found on our brochure and asked myself how I could help with this mission statement and how I could encourage you, the members, to accomplish this mission.

Your response to the survey that you received in the mail some weeks ago is an effort to provide YOU with activities that interest YOU. A few of you indicated that your main interest was to receive the newsletter, others indicated that you wanted to take part in some of the activities listed on the survey — hiking, golfing, dancing, book club, discussions, potlucks, bridge—and someone added the additional activity of "karaoke". Whatever you want is what we can do!!

Thanks to President-Elect Richard Brinkman, we have an outstanding program for this year which not only includes interesting speakers on a variety of topics, but also includes wine and cheese, potlucks and opening our sessions to the Alumni since some topics are of universal interest to the university community.

Thanks to Mary Gordon-Brannan, special activities coordinator, for facilitating the organization of the special interest groups. A representative group from those members interested in hiking, bridge and potluck have already met and set a date for a first "gathering". Look for upcoming announcements regarding a book club, discussion groups, dancing and golfing. Alyse Collins, our office manager, has put together a RAPS website (http://www.raps.pdx.edu) that you will find informative and interesting----AND it includes a calendar of RAPS and University activities.

Since it’s YOUR organization, I hope each of you finds an activity which meets your needs and helps accomplish the mission statement above. If the organization isn’t meeting your needs, please let one of the board members know your suggestions for improvement. I look forward to a year of fun, collegiality and communication.

RAPS bridge group sets its initial meeting for Tuesday, October 21

The Bridge Planning Committee is off to a quick start. We have set a date to start playing and will make plans for future activities from there.

The first meeting will be from 1:30 pm to around 4:30 pm on Tuesday, October 21, at the home of Colin and Pat Dunkeld. 7610 SW Miner Way, Portland (close to SW 78th Ave. and Canyon Drive).

It is important that we know how many are coming. So please call (503-292-0838) or e-mail (colindun@easystreet.com) before Friday, October 17, for directions and an update on how many are coming so far.

All are welcome with or without a partner. If we are very lucky we will get 4, 8, or 12! If not, we will work out a rotational system when we arrive. We can get to know each other and figure out a way to get just the right numbers in the future.

Before we leave, we will sum up how things went.

PSU Weekend slates 24 free lectures for Seminar Day, Saturday, November 8.

(Continued from Page 1)
the author of two other best-sellers about Italy, and five books of poetry. She now devotes herself solely to writing and divides her time between San Francisco and Tuscany.

"We are delighted to have Frances Mayes here for PSU Weekend to share her vision of a good life in Italy," said Pat Squire, director of alumni relations. "While our weekend guests love our offerings of intellectual, cultural and current events topics, PSU Weekend is about learning, and this year, a little about dreaming."

PSU Weekend, this year under the theme of "La dolce vita" (the sweet life), runs November 7-9 and offers 24 free lectures on Seminar Day, Saturday, November 8.

Call 503-725-4949 for more information or to pre-register. See online at http://www.alumni.pdx.edu for additional information.
PERS facts, figures, and problem don’t add up
By Jack Sollis
Secretary/Treasurer
Oregon PERS Retirees, Inc.

OPERS: is it really in trouble or has The Oregonian created totally factious image?

Last year The Oregonian started a huge campaign to reveal the great trouble PERS was in and published article and editorial one after another with the impression “the sky is falling”. Remember chicken little?

The actual facts are that the benefits in force reserve (this is to pay pensions) was in a paper deficit because the stock market went to hell in a basket. The value of the reserve is determined by the value of the PERS investments. The funding of the reserve is based on the premise that there is enough money (its value) to pay all retirees and to pay the retirement of all members of the system still working if they were all to retire tomorrow.

The deficit is over 30 years and at its height it was 17.9 billion—on paper. If the stock market keeps coming back it could be down to 11 billion by the end of the year. What do you know, the sky didn’t fall?

The actual reserves were in the hole 2.5 billion. The fixed account is earning 13% now and the variable 16%. The board will be able to reduce the reserve deficit by a large amount by the end of the year.

Less than 3% of retirees got an average of 105% of their final average salary. The Oregonian published enough false, misleading and confusing statements that even members of the legislature were saying “all retirees get 120% of their final average salary” — just like gossip — it got better (??) every time it was repeated...

These are all figures I got from PERS: Bottom line the system is and will survive; the retirees who got over 100% of their final average earned it legally and fairly. The actual facts are that The Oregonian fostered a panic, the legislature bought it, and in another year, they both will have egg on their faces.

Final note—there have been 12 petitions filed in the supreme court to overturn the changes in the system the legislature deemed necessary to cure a problem that really didn’t exist.

In my senior years, I have really learned to step back and look at an alleged problem to make sure it is not a problem or as bad as some say. The Oregonian is not, nor is the legislature looking at the real facts. One of the 12 petitions filed is ours as we are out to protect retirees.

New RAPS hiking group sets initial event date

Colin Dunkeld, Larry Sawyer, Marge Terdal and Maxine Thomas met and formed a hiking group. They agreed to hold one hike per month. The second Saturday has initially been chosen. Marge Terdal (503-244-5714) has agreed to be the contact person for the first two hikes.

The individual hikes will be coordinated and led by different members. Larry Sawyer will coordinate the first hike. It will be at 8:30 am on Saturday October 11th on the Forest Park Maple Trail.

The Maple Trail is said to be one of the most scenic trails in Forest Park. Depending on the weather, the abundant big leaf maple trees might be showing some color by October 11th. The trail loop is 7.5 miles long, but it can be shortened if agreed on by the group.

Elevation gain is 400 feet. Estimated time is 3.5 hours. The trail is listed in Houle’s One City’s Wilderness (Portland’s Forest Park) and Sullivan’s 100 Hikes in Northwest Oregon.

The group will meet at the trailhead at 8:30 am. Take St. Helens Road (U.S. 30) 3.2 miles from the intersection of N.W. 23rd Ave. and N.W. Vaughn Street to N.W. Saltzman Road. Turn left on to Saltzman, and drive the paved, winding road 0.7 miles to the park gate. The trailhead is 0.5 miles past the gate.

For further information and confirmation of attendance, contact Larry Sawyer (503) 646-8782 or PSU23312@pdx.edu.

The November hike has been set for Oaks Bottom and extending towards Ross Island. It will be at 9:00 am on Friday, November 14th. (PSU Weekend is being held on the second Saturday).

"In creativity, the only hard thing is to begin; a grass blade's no easier to make than an oak."

James Lowell.