



## Retirement Association of Portland State

Portland State University  
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Office hours:  
Tuesdays and Thursdays  
11:30 am to 5:30 pm

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Laureen Nussbaum and Marge Terdal don snowshoes for the RAPS Hikers' Feb. 11 trek along Bennett Pass near Mt. Hood Meadows. Photo by Larry Sawyer.

## Progress and problems

# Mel Gurtov analyzes China's rise

Political Science Professor Mel Gurtov, addressing the February RAPS meeting, gave his assessment of contemporary China, first summarizing the tremendous progress the country has made in the past 20 years and then commenting on some of its continuing problems.

China has lifted about 600 million people out of poverty, an incredible feat. Gurtov noted that the outside world too often measures China's rise solely in terms of economic development, and he focused attention on China's achievements in human development. According to the UN Human Development Index, "China is outstanding" in all categories, said Gurtov. The index measures many aspects of life, including literacy, public health, poverty, income, and other non-economic factors.

He pointed out that China invested over 50 billion dollars last year in clean energy (hydro, wind, solar, and new technology), leading the world. China is

# President's Message

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On Tuesday evening, Feb. 22, the University paused to honor the achievements of several PSU alumni, students and faculty for outstanding contributions to the University, their professions and to the greater community. Sponsored by the Alumni Association, "PSU Salutes" is a reminder of the extensive impact our institution has not only on the lives of those who attend but also on the wider community.

Those honored in a ceremony at the Governor Hotel included:

- **Andre Craan**, a PSU biology graduate who analyzes and evaluates pharmaceuticals in Canada, teaches at the University of Quebec at Montreal, and publishes extensively on toxicology and consumer products;
- **Angela Wykoff**, who earned three degrees from PSU, was a senior account executive with BPA, and has devoted hundreds of hours of volunteer service on Alumni, University and community committees;
- **Amber Fowler**, an MPA graduate, who founded Dress for Success Inland Northwest, which provides career clothing and support services to women in transition in or to the workforce;
- **Nabil Mistkawi**, a 2010 PhD graduate in Physical Chemistry who is a senior engineer at Intel, was the inventor on nine patents while a student, has earned many scientific awards, and was highlighted by President Barak Obama during his recent speech at Intel.
- **Sherril B. Gelmon**, who received the Distinguished Faculty Achievement Award for her contributions to academics and to the wider community.

At this time, when there is so much public discussion regarding education funding and the future of higher education in Oregon, these recognition programs not only highlight the tremendous diversity of our school, they also keep us grounded in the real purpose and influence of PSU and similar institutions around the world.

*--Clarence Hein*

## 'Riches of a City'

### March RAPS program examines Portland family art treasures

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**O**n March 17, RAPS will tour the "Riches of a City: Portland Collects" exhibition at the Portland Art Museum. The show features more than 200 objects collected by various Portland families over the years. More information on the exhibition can be found at <http://www.PortlandArtMuseum.org>.

Those who wish to participate must reserve their place by contacting Maya Burton in the RAPS office prior to Thursday, March 10. For those who are members of the Museum, there is no cost to the tour. For non-members, payment of \$8 per person must be made at the time reservations are made. We hope to see you there.

February was the month of RAPS' annual potluck lunch, held on Feb. 17, and the tables were, as usual, laden with good food. We thank Beryl Dahl for her organizational skills in seeing that we had main dishes, salads, and lots of desserts.

RAPS was privileged to have Mel Gurtov, PSU professor emeritus of political science, as our speaker. (See story on page 1.) His presentation was fascinating, supplementing what one knows from the newspapers with very different perspectives. The audience had many questions and would have happily continued the conversation beyond the time available.

*--Joan Shireman*

### Board seeks your opinions on annual holiday event

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Inserted in this issue of the RAPS Sheet is a questionnaire about the annual RAPS holiday dinner. Let the RAPS Board know your opinions about the venue, food choices, timing, and other issues related to the December event.

You can write your comments directly on the form provided and mail it to the RAPS Office (RAPS, PSU, PO Box 751, Portland OR 97207-0751) or send your comments via email to [raps@pdx.edu](mailto:raps@pdx.edu).

## RAPS club reports

### Book Club tackles *Tinkers*'

The RAPS Book Club will meet Tuesday, March 15 at 1:30 pm at the home of Dez Roberts, located at 2610 SW 54th in Portland. Contact her at [dezrob@comcast.net](mailto:dezrob@comcast.net) or 503-679-3870 to RSVP and for directions.

This month the club discusses the Pulitzer Prize winner *Tinkers*, written by Paul Harding. The book is described on the back cover as follows:

An old man lies dying. As time collapses into memory, he travels deep into his past where he is reunited with his father and relives the wonder and pain of his impoverished New England youth. At once heartbreaking and life affirming, *Tinkers* is an elegiac meditation on love, loss, and the fierce beauty of nature.

Looking ahead to April, we will read the Multnomah County Library Everybody Reads selection *The Other Wes Moore* by Wes Moore. As always, we encourage anyone to join us.

--Mary Brannan

### RAPS Hikers seek magnolias in March

On Friday, March 11 we will hike in Forest Park. The exact route will be determined when we find out if the magnolias are in bloom. The Nussbaums will coordinate this hike. Meet at 9:30 am at the Rose Garden concessions stand. Lunch will be in a restaurant/cafe in northwest Portland. Confirm your attendance with Larry Sawyer 503-771-1616 or [larry\\_sawyer@comcast.net](mailto:larry_sawyer@comcast.net).

On Friday, April 8 we will hike the canyon trail in Silver Falls State Park. We will carpool and take a sack lunch. Marge Terdal will coordinate the April hike, as Larry Sawyer will be out of town.

We held our first snowshoe hike in February. Due to only 5" of snow at Government Camp, we hiked a little over two miles at Bennett Pass near Meadows. The weather was clear and in the high 30s or low 40s. Three snowshoed and one cross country skied. The last two times we were on the mountain we stopped at the Zigzag ranger station and talked to ranger Sam Oakland. He got a law degree after he left PSU and lectures occasionally at the Hatfield School.

--Larry Sawyer

### Bridge Group counts the cards March 8

The RAPS Bridge Group meets at 1:00 pm Tuesday, March 8. For further information, including the venue, call Colin Dunkeld, 503-292-0838. Please call by Friday, March 4.

--Colin Dunkeld

## PAST TENSE

### Remembering Sharkey Nelson

The recent death of one-time PSU basketball coach and faculty member Loyal "Sharkey" Nelson brought to mind an incident in Feb. 1965, when Nelson's team had played an away game at Southern Oregon. Coach Nelson learned of curfew violations by some team members and suspended them for the remainder of the season.



Sharkey Nelson in 1956

When other team members admitted that they, too, had violated the curfew regulation, Sharkey wound up suspending the entire team -- with the exception of his own son, John, who had been with him at the time. John later said, "I know it was extremely uncomfortable for him to suspend all the players but his son. I can assure you it was also very awkward for me."

Asked how he could dismiss the entire team, Sharkey replied, "I couldn't turn my back." Try to imagine that happening in athletics today.

The team used Junior Varsity players plus John Nelson to finish out the remaining three games of the season, with Bob Scruggs as acting coach. Some of the JV players would play their own game early in the day and come back for the varsity game in the evening. There was an outpouring of student support for the team and, just like a Hollywood movie, the players finished the season with a 73-69 overtime win against the eventual conference champion, Eastern Oregon. John Nelson recalls that "almost all of the suspended players came to the games in support of the team."

That was nearly a half century ago and I still remember the thrill of that final win.

--Clarence Hein

*Editor's note:* Clarence Hein was editor of the *Vanguard* at the time of the incident recounted above. Sharkey Nelson died Aug. 22, 2009 at the age of 96. His obituary appeared in the Oct. 2009 edition of the *RAPS Sheet*.

*PAST TENSE* features glimpses into Portland State's history. To submit a story (or an idea for one), email the RAPS History Preservation Committee at [raps@pdx.edu](mailto:raps@pdx.edu).

## In memoriam: Irene Place, 1912-2010

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Irene Place, Professor Emerita of Business Education, was born Jan. 27, 1912 in Omaha, NE and died Dec. 27, 2010 at Willamette View Terrace in Portland.

Professor Place earned a BA degree at the University of Nebraska in 1932, an MA at Columbia Teachers College



Irene Place @ 1970

in 1933 and an Ed D at New York University in 1946. She launched her business education career as instructor and dean at Briarcliff Junior College in New York in 1933, moving to Marshall College's School of Business in Huntington WV in 1936.

The 1930s Great Depression severely impacted the business and education sectors but the federal government's

recovery measures created a steady need for office management training, including typing, stenography, and bookkeeping.

Professor Place held positions as assistant professor of business and department head at the University of Toledo, in Ohio, from 1937 to 1943. She next advanced to the University of Michigan's Graduate School of Business Administration, where she held appointments as associate professor and department head in office management and secretarial training until coming to PSU in 1967.

In 1940 Irene married Darold Place, an engineer who specialized in designing structures with agricultural applications. After three decades of professional experience in the Midwest, the Places relocated to the Pacific Northwest in 1967. Irene joined PSU's six-year old School of Business Administration as it assumed an assigned mission to serve the urban community's higher education needs. Her appointment reflected the institution's conscious effort to engage faculty who had demonstrated distinguished career achievements that would support an ongoing movement toward comprehensive university status.

Partly in response to burgeoning instructional offerings designed to prepare students for employment in business and industry, the School of Business had mounted a Business Teacher Education program, in conjunction with the School of Education, to train and

certify students for secondary school and community college level teaching opportunities.

Professor Place applied her experience to expanding those efforts through adding upper division and graduate components emphasizing office records management and administration. Throughout her career, she urged women students to seek business career advancement by preparing for meaningful service at managerial rather than operational levels.

Irene actively participated in national, regional and state professional associations through presentations at conferences and office-holding. She authored seven books and various articles covering the fields of office administration and management, systems analysis, and business teacher training. After retirement she continued to update her publications, and with Sylvia Plummer, a former administrative assistant to the Dean of Business Administration, she co-authored *Women in Management* (1980), a well-received work stemming from earlier studies promoting successful outcomes for secretarial careers.

In April 1998 RAPS honored Irene with its Outstanding Retired Faculty Award, "in recognition of outstanding professional accomplishments and major contributions to the university, (and) the community. . ." The university community owes Professor Emerita Irene Place a full measure of gratitude for enduring contributions to the institution's growth and development.

Irene participated in the RAPS bridge group until a few weeks before her death. At her request, no services were held, and her remains have been interred in a Michigan cemetery beside those of her late husband. Three nieces survive her.

--Victor C. Dahl, Professor Emeritus of History, with assistance from Alice M. Yetka, Professor Emerita of Business Administration; Roger L. Moseley, Professor Emeritus of Business Administration; and Sylvia E. Moseley, Program Executive (retired), HPE

## In memoriam: Gilbert Thomas Benson, 1929-2011

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**A**ssociate Professor Emeritus Gilbert Thomas Benson was born Oct. 3, 1929 in Los Angeles and died in Portland Jan. 24, 2011.

During his childhood the Benson family moved to Portland where "Tom"-- as he preferred to be



**Tom Benson in 1970**

Addressed -- attended public schools before completing his secondary education at Phillips Academy in Andover MA.

From 1948 to 1950 he attended California Institute of Technology and in 1952 earned a baccalaureate degree in geology at Stanford, followed by a master's degree from the same institution in 1953.

After five years of employment as a geologist

for Texaco, Tom pursued graduate studies at Yale where he completed a PhD degree in 1963.

In 1962 Professor Benson launched his instructional career by taking an appointment at the University of Oregon to teach specialty courses in structural and photo geology. There he inaugurated an undergraduate honors program. Ensuing research and fieldwork focusing on Eastern Oregon's geological features resulted in several publications. He also engaged in outreach services as a consultant to the U.S. Forest Service and state agencies.

Tom joined the PSU faculty in 1968 as increasing undergraduate and graduate enrollments, coupled with academic program expansion, steadily moved the institution toward comprehensive university status. His popular classroom presentations complemented by exciting regional field trips -- as well as visits to Hawaii's volcanic area -- attracted high levels of student participation. He successfully co-directed the highly innovative and successful University Scholars program in 1973-74.

Along with departmental colleagues, Tom actively participated in scholarly responses to the May 1980 Mount St. Helens eruption by providing appropriate, clearly understandable information for media distribution to highly concerned metropolitan and nationwide audiences. Throughout this exciting seismological period, Tom deployed his professional expertise by serving as a resident consultant to Channel 2 KATU. For an extended period, his regularly scheduled

program reports caused him to be regarded as a television broadcasting personality.

Tom's lifelong intellectual pursuits included studying European and United States history, which he supplemented with relevant hands-on travel, such as rafting through the Grand Canyon and visiting Hawaii's volcanoes. Throughout his teaching career, Tom sought to stimulate his students to think about their world in terms of millions of years.

In 1957 Tom married Sarah "Sally" Carrington, an accomplished musician, who preceded him in death. They enjoyed traveling together and divided their time between homes in Lake Oswego and Hawaii. Their son Chester, daughter-in-law Darcy, step grandchild Chris Parker, all of Lake Oswego, and Tom's sister, Margaret Maradudin of Newport Beach CA, survive him.

Through service on University governance bodies and the Honors Program, Tom Benson developed a wide circle of friends across the campus. Those of us who knew and worked with him highly regarded his intellectual achievements and enjoyed his congenial personality. The academic community readily acknowledges his significant contributions to the institution.

Remembrances may be made to the Oregon Historical Society and Portland State University. A private memorial service will be conducted. His obituary, which appeared in the *Oregonian* Jan. 30, 2011 and the *Lake Oswego Review* Feb. 3, 2011, may be consulted in the RAPS office.

--Victor C. Dahl, Professor Emeritus of History



Mel Gurtov, professor emeritus of political science, pictured at the Feb. 2011 RAPS meeting. Photo by Larry Sawyer.

## Gurtov on China . . . cont. from p. 2

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busily engaged in cleaning up its pollution -- and China's problems in this respect are admittedly huge.

Gurtov stressed that there has been a change in how leadership successions are determined. The next leader, almost certainly 57-year-old Xi Jinping, will be installed because of experience and qualification, not just his position in the Communist Party hierarchy. The new leadership will be younger than previous groups. China's routine is now "up and out" at 68, Gurtov said. He characterized the succession procedures as "natural selection" and predicted smooth transitions in leadership next year when President Hu Jintao steps down.

While there is and will be for the foreseeable future no free unionization in China, Gurtov noted that the state-run unions are becoming more effective in collective bargaining. In fact, he said, "China is losing its edge" in labor costs to Vietnam and other developing states. And some State Operated Enterprises (SOE) are being privatized. "A great deal of the economy is now in private hands," he pointed out.

In addition, foreign investors in the Chinese economy are legion. "Sixty percent of China's exports originate from foreign-owned corporations," said Gurtov, adding that many of those are American. Production of goods and services is skyrocketing upward, with pay scales rising in SOE as well as private companies. The current labor shortage in China assures that increases in pay scales will continue.

The increasing gap between the rich and the poor is thought by Gurtov to be "China's Achilles' Heel." Urban workers now earn about 3½ times more than rural workers, he said, and the growing size of the gap is leading to unrest. In addition, there is ethnic unrest,

and displaced workers from inefficient closed factories have openly expressed discontent. Demonstrations resulting from these conditions are called "mass incidents" by the Chinese authorities and now number about 200,000 annually.

"The survival of the one party state," said Gurtov, "is the number one item on the leadership agenda." The Communist Party leadership realizes it must take action in the face of widespread corruption. In 2009 146,500 instances of "party disciplinary punishment" were reported. Most penalties are mild but there have been executions. While serious critical comments about the regime are possible, there is a "forbidden zone" beyond which Chinese critics cannot go without serious consequences. Said Gurtov, "We all know what would happen." A leading Chinese professor has written that "few people can confidently define what the Chinese value system is or whether a coherent value system exists beyond 'Get Rich, Enjoy Life, and Patriotism.'"

Gurtov stated that China is no real threat to America. The problems China faces at home -- demographic changes due to the "one child per family" policy, public health problems exacerbated by widespread pollution, and the huge costs of bailing out inefficient SOE -- have convinced the Chinese leadership that the country "cannot have both guns and butter." The Chinese have also learned from the Soviet Union's demise and the huge debt of the United States that investing too much in arms results in great domestic difficulties. China, said Gurtov, chooses "to spend the money that needs to be spent on infrastructure, transportation, education, science and technology, and creating a new public health system."

China does have some irreducible international goals: Taiwan cannot be declared independent, and Chinese territory, including its air space and claims on its frontiers and in the Southwest Pacific, must not be violated. The recent Obama-Hu talks were perhaps not the success they seemed to be, said Gurtov. Both Bush 43 and Obama invited China to be "responsible stakeholders," but what China really wants, he said, is equality -- to be recognized as an equal at the bargaining table.

Gurtov summarized China's achievements -- improvement in the quality of life, positive change in leadership, increasing decentralization, and successful market socialism. Given America's interest in seeing these changes take place, we should "start being happy about China," said Gurtov, and "seek common ground while reserving differences."

--Charlie White

