



Retirement Association of Portland State

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LEACH BOTANICAL GARDEN

RAPS members tour 'Portland's best-kept botanical secret'



Twenty-four RAPS members toured the Leach Botanical Garden in southeast Portland on Sept. 20. Our guides, Scotty Fairchild, Leach Garden steward, and Scott Hoelscher, assistant gardener, shared their extensive knowledge of the garden's history and its trees, shrubbery, and wildflowers while they led us along paths that meander through the 16-acre property.

Originally the garden site was part of a 320-acre donation land claim belonging to Jacob Johnson, an early sawmill operator. In 1931, John and Lilla Leach purchased part of what had been Johnson's property. John, a pharmacist and community leader, and Lilla, an accomplished botanist, devoted their land to their fascination with plants.

In the 1920s and '30s, Lilla and John explored the wilderness areas of Oregon and Washington, seeking new plants. Lilla discovered five plant species new to science. One of these species dates back 10 million years; it was given the Latinized form of its discoverer's name, *Kalmiopsis leachiana*.

By the 1940s, John and Lilla gave up their explorations and devoted them-



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Scott Hoelscher, assistant gardener, (right, top photo) led one of two RAPS tours of the Leach Botanical Garden, which included a stop at the stone summer cabin near the banks of Johnson Creek (bottom photo).

President's Message

The new academic year is now under way for Oregon's largest university. If you walk around campus you will see major changes taking place. The glazed, blue-brick PCAT building is being demolished to make room for the six-story Academic and Student Recreation Center, scheduled to open in fall 2009. Shattuck Hall (originally an elementary school built in 1914-15) is closed this year for renovation. New space includes the Unitus Building (SW 4th and Lincoln), which includes Graduate Studies and the PSU Foundation.

Most visible is Tri-Met's new light rail project, the Green Line, scheduled to begin September 2009. Tracks are laid on SW Fifth, and coming to SW Sixth. PSU is the top transit destination in downtown, with 40 percent of our students, faculty, and staff riding Tri-Met.

Our appreciation goes to the Athletic Department, and Director Torre Chisholm and Assistant Director Scott Herrin, for our complimentary tickets to the football home opener on Sept. 8. One of the largest crowds ever got to watch the new black-uniformed Vikings. The Vikings' fortunes improved a week later in the Sacramento State game.

On Sept. 20, two dozen RAPS members and guests enjoyed a tour of Portland's Leach Botanical Gardens—and a delightful Vietnamese lunch afterward. Are we developing a September theme of "games and gardens"?

Our speaker series begins October 18 with Kilong Ung, whose topic is "An American Journey: From the Khmer Rouge's Killing Fields to the Royal Rosaria." Marge Terdal, program chair, is developing a great program series for this year.

This is your organization—please participate and enjoy the RAPS programs, activities, and opportunities in this coming year.

—Bob Tufts



Scotty Fairchild, Leach Garden steward (left, back to camera), gave the RAPS group an introduction to the garden before the tours began.

Leach Garden tour . . . continued from page 1

selves to the five-acre site that they named Sleepy Hollow. After Lilla's death in the early 1980s, the garden became the property of Portland Parks and Recreation, and is operated and maintained by the Leach Garden Friends in cooperation with Park Parks and Recreation.

The garden has grown to nearly 16 acres and is

described on its Web site (www.leachgarden.org) as "Portland's best-kept botanical secret." The collection of more than 2,000 species and cultivars includes native as well as non-native plants, such as viburnums, witch hazels, camellias, woody groundcovers, and azaleas of the southeastern United States.

RAPS club reports

Book Club choice: Desai's 'Inheritance of Loss'

The Book Club will meet at 1:30 p.m. on Oct. 16 at Terwilliger Plaza, 2545 SW Terwilliger Blvd. Call Prue Douglas at 503-299-4928 to RSVP and for directions. We will talk about the *Inheritance of Loss* by Kiran Desai, awarded the Man Booker Prize in 2006. The book is described on the cover:

In a crumbling, isolated house at the foot of Mount Kanchenjunga in the Himalayas lives an embittered judge who wants only to retire in peace, when his orphaned granddaughter, Sai, arrives on his doorstep. The judge's cook watches over her distractedly, for his thoughts are often on his son, Biju, who is hopscotching from one gritty New York restaurant to another. Kiran Desai's brilliant novel, published to huge acclaim, is a story of joy and despair. Her characters face numerous choices that majestically illuminate the consequences of colonialism as it collides with the modern world.

The RAPS book group met in September and discussed the delightful book *Water for Elephants* by Sara Gruen, which is currently on the best-seller list. Our discussion centered on relationships we found between this story of Depression-era circus life with our own experiences. We noted similarities between descriptions in the book of dreadful treatment of the unemployed and homeless during the Depression and recent news reports of home foreclosures as well as the growing number of homeless school children in the Portland area. We also related our own experiences with aging to those of the narrator, who finds himself in a nursing home at age 93.

In November, we will discuss *Three Cups of Tea* by Greg Mortenson. There is no December meeting, but we will meet in January to discuss *The Whistling Season* by Ivan Doig.

—Mary Brannan and Marge Terdal

Bridge Group meets Oct. 9

The next meeting of the RAPS Bridge Group will be at 1:00 p.m. on Tuesday, Oct. 9. We will meet at Willamette View, the home of Irene Place.

The Bridge Group is open to new

members. Please call (503-292-0838) or email (colinkeld@gmail.com) me if you have any questions about the group. If you would like to play, please call or email me no later than Friday, October 5.

—Colin Dunkeld

Hikers head to Mount St. Helens

The October hike will be at Ape Caves on Mount St. Helens on Oct. 26. Ape Caves are lava tubes, and most of the hike will be underground. We will traverse between the upper and lower entrances.

Please bring a strong flashlight with good batteries. I do not believe that gas Coleman-style lanterns are allowed, but propane ones are allowed; I'll try to confirm this before the hike. We'll have a sack lunch at the Lava Cast Forest picnic area. Since we will not carry the lunches on the hike, coolers are OK.

Meet at the Jantzen Beach Safeway parking lot at 9:00 a.m. on Friday, Oct. 26. We will carpool from there.

Please confirm with me at 503-771-1616 or larry_sawyer@comcast.net by Thursday October 25.

The September tram hike was held after the October RAPS Sheet deadline.

—Larry Sawyer

PAST TENSE

Short course: From ERFOPS to REPPS to RAPS

RAPS wasn't always RAPS, or even anything close. The forerunner, dubbed the Professors Club, was formed in the early 1960s by a group of senior academics.



Channing Briggs



John Allen

Professor Channing Briggs was the engine behind early efforts to develop a formal association of retired PSU faculty, and Professor John Elliot Allen did substantial groundwork to help form the association, which was originally named the Emeriti and Retired Faculty of Portland State (ERFOPS). By 1985, the name was changed to Retired & Emeriti Professors of Portland State (REPPS), and in 2001 to Retired Association of Portland State (RAPS), reflecting the inclusion of retired staff members.

Past Tense features glimpses into Portland State's past. To submit a story (or an idea for one), email the RAPS History Preservation Committee at raps@pdx.edu. Word count should not exceed 100.

Photos courtesy PSU archives

Survivor of Khmer Rouge tells story to RAPS Oct. 18

A Portland resident will tell about his experience during the Khmer Rouge genocide in Cambodia and his overcoming many obstacles to begin a new life in Oregon. The program will be Thursday, Oct. 18, 1:00 to 3:00 p.m., in 338 Smith Memorial Union.

Kilong Ung was just a child when the Khmer Rouge took control of Cambodia in 1975. Ten of his family members, including his parents, died either from starvation or were executed. Separated from his family, Kilong worked in labor camps 13 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year with little to no food. Kilong survived starvation, fear, and torture. In 1979 an older sister located him, and, together with other victims of the Khmer Rouge, they fled to Thailand. Eventually they received sponsorship and moved to Portland, where Kilong received his high school and college education.

He will tell us about the brutal conditions in Cambodia's killing fields, the treacherous trek to the Thai

border under bullets and through minefields, the difficult life in refugee camps, and his life since coming to the United States. Today he is an advocate for Khmer community issues, a Rotarian and a Royal Rosarian. As his Web page (www.kilongung.com) says, he is "becoming a part of a force that makes the world a better place, one person at a time."

Kilong graduated from Cleveland High School in 1983, Reed College with a B.A. in mathematics in 1987, and Bowling Green State University with an M.S. in applied statistics and operations research in 1989. He has worked as a senior consultant for Anderson Consulting and an account manager at United Data Processing. Currently he is a senior software engineer at CheckFree and an adjunct instructor at Portland Community College. His volunteer work includes the Cambodian-American Community of Oregon (he is currently the president), Rotary Club of Portland, Royal Rosarians, and several committees and task forces. He has spoken frequently about the Khmer Rouge genocide, which claimed more than 2 million lives.



September was an active month for RAPS with free tickets to the Vikings' opening game and a tour of Leach Botanical Garden. The football game attracted 39 RAPS members and friends, who welcomed new coach Jerry Glanville and cheered on the team despite a loss to UC Davis.

Twenty-four members toured the Leach Botanical Garden on Sept. 20; see story on page 1.

—Marge Terdal

Mark your calendars

Thursday, October 18, 1:00 p.m.

Kilong Ung, "An American Journey: From the Khmer Rouge's Killing Fields to the Royal Rosaria"

Thursday, November 15, 1:00 p.m.

Pah Chen, "Hydrogen Economy—Real or Hype?"

Tuesday, December 18, 6 to 9 p.m.

Christmas dinner at Multnomah Athletic Club