



Retirees Association

Spring Newsletter 2014

REPORT FROM RETIREES ASSOCIATION CO-CHAIRS

On April 10, Association Co-Chairs Ralph Fidler and David Hoffman joined President Cullinan for a cordial, productive meeting. In our discussion, the president reported that the current agreement between the Association and the University dating from 2013 continues in effect. This means that, using our ID cards, retired emeritus faculty and staff can receive a 10% discount in the University bookstore. Bookstore staff will be reminded of this agreement. Although retired faculty can obtain parking stickers, this benefit is not provided to retired staff.

We discussed Emeritus Association projects for the benefit of the University, including an idea for a memorial bench on campus, dedicated to retired faculty and staff, past and present. It was agreed that the Association might consider memorials other than a marble bench. Dave wondered about the possibility of a stately tree.

Dr. Cullinan believes the Emeritus Scholarship Fund is our most appreciated service to the University. She said that a mere five hundred dollar scholarship award often makes the difference of whether a student stays or departs from higher education.

Three members of the Association are reading student applications for one \$500 award for the coming academic year. The minutes of the council's meeting on April 2 show that the governing council voted to raise the minimum GPA required for the award to 3.5. In addition, the council approved a proposal to limit the scholarship to only returning students. Even given these threshold escalations, we have thirty-two applicants who meet the requirement, many whose résumés far exceed the basics. Deciding who the most deserving candidates are is no easy task. We currently have close to \$30,500 in our scholarship corpus, and happily, it continues to grow. We draw scholarship funds from earnings. Thanks to all of the donors.

For our May 16 Association luncheon, members will meet in the Rogue River Room at the Stevenson Union. Rather than being served buffet style, we will each purchase lunch in the Union's food court and rejoin colleagues for our normal around-the-table eating and visiting before the meeting's presentation. This adjustment is based on positive feedback from our winter luncheon meeting at the new Hawk Hall where participants chose their individual lunches.

Also, we will no longer have program coordination provided by Anya Neher from Osher's Lifelong Learning Center. We are most grateful for Anya's past assistance and wish her well.

The minutes from the last governing council meeting will indicate that a proposal has been made to reduce the size of the council, making it easier to gather a quorum for a meeting and to facilitate the search for new council members. The Association is growing smaller, but not at an overwhelming rate.

President Cullinan will be the featured speaker at our May 16 luncheon. During our visit to her office, she agreed to devote her remarks to issues related to cutbacks in programs and how she thinks these affect University offerings and the morale of students and staff. She may also talk about the impact she anticipates from the disbanding of the State Board of Higher Education. We expect her talk to be both frank and informative.

We have received a list of names of faculty and staff who are retiring this spring and they will be invited to join us on the 16th. We hope to see you on the 16th. ▲

The Retirees Association Spring Luncheon

GUEST SPEAKER

Mary Cullinan

May 16, 11:30am–1:30pm

SU Rogue River Room

No RSVP's needed, as we will be buying our own lunches in the food court at the Union

REMINISCENCES /by Dave Hoffman

In a reflective moment, Leroy "Satchel" Paige once advised, "Don't look back—something might be gaining on you." But before I was to follow the old philosopher's advice, I had to be convinced that old age has definitely gaining on me. In short, it was! Some clues have been subtle, others not so. I've replaced my watch twice in the past year after forgetting to remove it before taking a shower, and for the last several weeks I've searched the house for my third watch! This summer at the airport I started to remove my shoes, when the TSA agent loudly announced, "Sir, you're at the age where you don't need to remove your shoes." I wanted to argue, but he just said, "Move along, please."

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LUNCH AT MORNING GLORY by Jim Dean

How good it was to see them again! I had worked with such lively spirits: Alice Kulp (Provost's Office), Barbara Cantrall (School of Arts and Letters), and Lavelle Castle (Vice President for Administration's Office). It was late February, and we met at the Morning Glory Café for lunch and reunion. We caught up, laughed, compared medical ailments, reminisced, and told mostly true tales. We were sad when we discussed Sheldon Rio's passing. "One year he served as interim provost," Alice said. "I thought he would be serious and formal, he was so dignified. But that wasn't the way it was. He was delightful—we had such fun in the office that year."

I arranged for the four of us to get together for two reasons: because I enjoyed their company; and because I was interested in gathering material for an article. I've long been impressed by how women who retire from the University's workforce maintain friendships. What dynamics were at work? I hoped having lunch with three women who had served the University so ably might provide some answers.

I wish I could say that I discovered some secret behavior peculiar to a Divine Sisterhood—one that explained their continuing association and enjoyment of one another's company. But I did not. At least not directly. However, I think you'll find what we had to say to one another instructive.

Lavelle led off with a story about Provost Ernie Ettlrich and Dean of Administration Ron Bolstad. They were going to a State Board meeting in Salem. Ernie was driving, perhaps a little fast. They noticed a state trooper's car atop an overpass, its lights flashing. Once they went under the overpass, the police car roared down the on ramp and pulled up behind them. Ron looked back and said to Ernie, "He wants us to pull over." So Ernie did.

Neither man was happy about being ticketed. A patrolman of the standard sort (utility belt, radio, Smokey Bear hat) walked up to the car. "Can I see your driver's license, please?" he gravely asked Ernie. Ernie showed it. Then the patrolman cracked a smile and told them they were not being ticketed. The State Board meeting had been cancelled, but the word didn't reach campus by phone until the two were already on their way. This was before cell phones, and the only way to contact them and save them a long drive up and back was to call the Highway Patrol and have them stopped. All in all, a unique way to deliver a message.

Together we recalled how inventive Alice had been in using toilet paper for decorative purposes. I once saw her emerging from Churchill Hall's ladies lavatory, with ten feet of toilet paper tucked in her skirt, trailing after her like a bridal train. My jaw dropped. I didn't know whether to whisper and tell her she had a problem, or be amused, or amazed, or appalled. Then she flashed her great mischievous grin and I suddenly knew how to respond. "We worked so hard, and there was so much stress in the job sometimes, that we needed to break loose and laugh," she said.

Next Barbara told us how surprised she had been, a while back, to have Bob McCoy knock on her door. She had worked for Bob when he was chair of mathematics, and they had long been friends. She invited him in. He said he couldn't come in, unless he brought someone with him. And he did. His new wife.

"He was just so darn happy, like a kid," Barbara said. "Bob and Margery lived next to this couple in Palm Desert, and they became the best of friends. The woman's husband died about the same time Bob's Marge did, and their shared grief united them. Then romance found a way."

I asked the three whether, after retirement, they had continued to have the boisterous Bunco parties I had heard so much about when I was provost. No, they no longer played Bunco, but they did get together for lunches, and usually for birthdays. Lavina Goble, who had worked in the Budget Office in Churchill Hall but now had a good job as a budget analyst at Green River Community College, in Washington State, came all the way from there to join them in festivities.

Lavelle asked if I knew that Alice and Barbara were twins. Born on the same day, month, and year, though not in the same place. "Double trouble," I replied, then asked if any of the group still traveled to Seven Feathers for a little gambling. They said no. Alice added, "I only ever played the penny machines. On my salary that's all I could afford." Lavelle asked me if I had ever heard President Sicuro sing "That Old Black Magic." He sang it every year. I admitted I had not. She did not say how good the singing was.

Sometimes our talk veered to more serious subjects: mad rushes to get contracts signed, arcane filing systems, misplaced files, scheduling nightmares, fellow workers who perfected the illusion of working without doing much, and coping with mentally ill students or hysterical faculty members in the office. We talked about the thickness of confidential personnel files. Some faculty members were "high maintenance" (thick files) and others low (thin files). Alice said she never had any trouble keeping institutional secrets. Her work for the CIA at Langley, prior to her coming to southern Oregon, made protecting secrets and confidences second nature.

One vivid memory Alice had of her years in the provost's office was of a man walking into the office with a rifle. Her first thought was, "Well, this is how I die." But she and others in the office managed to slip out, leaving Ernie Ettlrich to deal with the rifle carrier. Ernie soon determined that the rifle-toting man was actually a good citizen: he had persuaded someone else carrying the rifle across campus to surrender it. He had simply come to the provost's office for guidance, wanting to know who should assume custody of the weapon.

I get a little sentimental at the end of such visits as ours, so I told them how much I had enjoyed working with them, how touched I was by their affection, by their shielding me from unpleasantness. They had saved my bacon many a day.

Barbara earlier had teased me, noting how each time she finally got a dean trained, that one went up to Churchill Hall, and she had to start all over again. Now she added a final remark, saying in her charming, outspoken way: "I always figured a big part of our job was to make our bosses look good, and help make the University a better place."

I walked away realizing again how diligent they had been in sustaining, supporting, and standing by me and others like me. I also realized how indispensable their sense of humor had been to our sanity.

I decided to stop looking for truths about a Divine Sisterhood. It was far better just to enjoy occasional lunches with delightful women. ▲

IN MEMORIUM

KEN BARTLETT 1925–2014

SHELDON RIO 1927–2014

PETE SEEGER by Laura Young

When Pete Seeger passed away on January 27, 2014, tributes poured in from around the world. The reputation and influence of this folk hero musician and activist were powerful and far-reaching. He had been included in the annual Kennedy Center event honoring outstanding contributors to American performers in the arts, won numerous Grammy awards, as well as the National Medal of Arts from the National Endowment for the Arts.

His long life dedicated to peace, social justice, environmental conservation, and, of course, folk music

stands as a beacon for those who still believe that solidarity, community, and song can make a difference. Is it a coincidence that he lived in Beacon, New York?

But I have a personal connection to folk music and Pete Seeger. In Pennsylvania, my family spent many happy hours singing folk music, and we performed regularly in public and at home during the period which is now termed as "folk revival." This was the era of sing-alongs, hootenannies, and protest songs. When I moved to Ashland, I sought out friends who were also passionate about folk music.

I decided to give one of my friends who was as passionate about folk music as I was a special gift for a birthday. I thought he might like to speak to Pete Seeger. I looked up Seeger's address in a book of addresses that existed before the widespread use of the Internet and wrote him a note asking if he would be willing to speak on the telephone with my friend on his birthday. He answered, "Yes, of course." This gracious gift of time on the phone to a stranger represented Seeger's generosity.

The next gesture was Seeger's informing us of a HARP (Holly Near, Arlo Guthrie,

Ronnie Gilbert, and Pete Seeger) concert at the Greek Theatre at U.C. Berkeley, September, 1984. We bought tickets and, after the concert, were invited backstage. I met Holly Near, Arlo Guthrie, Ronnie Guthrie, and Seeger guided us backstage to view a video of groups of folk singers from

Central America he was supporting. While we were listening to and watching the video, the audience, which had refused to leave, sang "Goodnight, Irene." Ronnie Gilbert came into the room and said, "Peter, they are singing to us."

A few years later, I invited Seeger to the

"Unite for Peace" event at Southern Oregon State College, October 2–4, 1987. He accepted, of course. He arrived at the airport carrying one small bag and his banjo, emblazoned with the words, "This machine surrounds hate and forces it to surrender."

The conversation in the car covered his many projects, including the Hudson River Sloop Clearwater Project dedicated to cleaning up the Hudson River.

One conversation has remained with me. The Seegers lived on a steep hillside (he called it a mountain, actually) above the Hudson River in Beacon. Several families live along the long dirt lane leading to the top of the hill where the Seeger's cabin sits. Every year, the winter rain and snow eroded the hillside road until by spring, the track became a treacherous washer board pitted with deep gullies. Every year, one cantankerous neighbor would rent a bulldozer and gouge the ruts until the road became passable. Seeger grew increasingly frustrated with this approach since it wasted resources, polluted the air surrounding the lane, and undermined the stability of the road. He called a meeting of the neighbors at his cabin, complete with song and plenty of food, and proposed that

residents be responsible for the section of the road nearest their houses, and on a regular schedule smooth out the ruts with rakes and shovels throughout the year. They all agreed, and every year after that, the residents, including the cantankerous bulldozer aficionado, conscientiously maintained the road. Seeger said that regular maintenance of anything is so much easier than allowing tasks to become monstrous instead of manageable.

The "Unite for Peace" event opened with remarks by Father Daniel Berrigan and Seeger's short concert. Britt Hall was packed. He sang, "We Shall Overcome," "Oh, Had I a Golden Thread," "Where Have All the Flowers Gone," and "Turn, Turn, Turn." He had asked me to make copies of "Old Hundred," the last song of the concert: "All people that on earth do dwell, Sing out for peace 'tween heav'n and hell. 'Tween East and West and low and high, Sing! Peace on earth and sea and sky. . ." The crowd sang with him with joyful enthusiasm. Then they demanded more songs until Seeger had to say, "That's enough."

He had a terrific sense of humor; see the lyrics of his parody of "Old Time Religion" for proof. He also had a way of making important statements in an aphoristic manner: "We need to get over the idea that killing an enemy solves anything." "In folk music, the essential thrust of songs needs to be kept, but songs also need to be updated and kept current." "Like all performers, I'm a practicing schizophrenic. I'm a show-off, too, in some ways." And one of my favorites, over his eggs and sausages at the airport the morning he left, "People who love laws and sausages should never see how they're made."

I feel honored to have had the privilege of meeting Pete Seeger. He lived a life of purpose, humility, peace, self-discipline, and song. As he stated in the Preface to *Carry It On: A History in Song and Picture of America's Working Men and Women*, "Keep singing. Keep making things better." ▲

Conferences/Senior Programs
Southern Oregon University
1250 Siskiyou Blvd.
Ashland, Oregon 97520

REMINISCENCES / *continued from page 1*

The most recent evidence of old age occurred last week when our pretty neighbor from across the street cleared the snow off our sidewalk, without even asking! There's also the new diet thing. Sabra says it's better, especially for the elderly.

Except for a smattering of fish or chicken, she says we should cut back on animal protein and beef up (oops!) on plant protein. This focus on "green" may be controversial enough for politics; it is a good deal worse when it comes to breakfast. It would not surprise me, if any day now, I might get handed a Yard-Grass Soufflé. Luckily for me, Sabra is an excellent chef. What she can do with broccoli is truly profound. So, through stealth and cunning, I have developed an array of strategies for sneaking in, then tucking away in the house the occasional bag of caramel corn or slab of peanut brittle.

So, contrary to old Sachtel's, advice, I have been looking back in time. This summer, while on a return to the family farm in Ohio, I discovered that my great-great-grandfather, Jacob Hoffman, had arrived in Pennsylvania from Germany about the time of the Revolutionary War. He was a

Mennonite. He married an American girl and their son, Jacob II, and his wife moved to Ohio. Their farm was located no more than fifteen miles from where had I grown up. Jacob II and his wife are buried in the same cemetery as my parents. There must have been some sort of a contest going on because Jacob II and his wife produced twelve children. Worse yet, he became a Methodist. I hadn't known this before. I had to get old before making these discoveries.

More recent and important memories for me are associated with my mother and her working arrangement she had with our two young boys. In summers, she would arrive from Ohio to visit and watch over the boys while Sabra and I were at work. Friends and folks at this end of town still talk about Mom's "to die for," Wayne County donuts and apple pies. Years ago, on the way home from the airport, the boys asked their Grandma when she would be making her donuts. They told her that they had reached the age where they could help. Sabra and I dropped the three off at the house so we could run an errand. We returned later to find the three of them working in the kitchen, getting the first

batch of raw donuts ready to be put in the boiling oil. The boys, barely able to see over the tabletop, had been wrapped in bath towels and placed on kitchen chairs. The towels were to keep the flour from getting on their clothes, but of course it got there anyway. Grandma was wearing Sabra's apron over the dress she had been wearing when she arrived on the plane. She had not taken time to unpack her bags. It's a great memory: the three of them, unaware of our presence and so totally involved in a task together.

In years to come, I will need no aid to reminisce about Jerry Insley. For me, Jerry has been a good friend and a distinctive colleague—a man with an honest and generous heart.

Memories of from the past: I am haunted by my mother's donuts and apple pie.

Good Advice: When your dad is angry at you and he says, "Do I look stupid?" don't answer him.

—Kelsey, age 7