



Retirees Association

Fall Newsletter 2011

FROM THE PRESIDENT

James Dean

Mark Twain advised writers to “eschew surplusage,” which roughly translates thus: Don’t be wordy or use pretentious diction. I am resolved to follow this advice while greeting all retirees on behalf of the Retirees Association and making you aware of certain facts and upcoming events.

The Retirees Association board members chose new officers at its June meeting: Jim Dean, President; Bruce Moats, Vice-president; Lodi Belford, Treasurer; and Wayne Schumacher, Secretary. Sue Corp was thanked for her exceptional job as President during the preceding year.

Fall Term’s Luncheon will be held October 21, 2011, beginning at 11:30 a. m. in the Rogue River Room. The featured speaker will be Judy Howard, artist and owner of the Hanson Howard Gallery in Ashland. The focus of her presentation will be the growth and evolution of the arts in Ashland and Southern Oregon during the past half century. There may also be a surprise musical event during the social half-hour preceding the luncheon itself.

Included in this Newsletter is a questionnaire devised by Council members. They are interested in determining what privileges members believe are most important to them as the Association continues its discussion with the University’s Administration about privileges and benefits available to retirees. We would appreciate receiving your responses. Forms may be turned in at the door the day of the luncheon or mailed to Sally Klein, Retirees Association Liaison and OLLIE Coordinator, SOU, 1250 Siskiyou Blvd, Ashland.

Cost of the luncheon will be 10 dollars for members of the Association, and a few dollars more for those not members. If you are not yet a member, you may pay a 20 dollar membership fee at the door. There will also be an opportunity for you to contribute to the Association’s scholarship fund, should you so desire.

I look forward to seeing you in the Rogue River Room in October, unless I bump into you earlier in that other great Ashland meeting place, the Bi-Mart parking lot. ▲

Lawson Inada Tribute

Rick Barot

The following is a selection from remarks made by Rick Barot at the SOU Poetry Festival honoring former Oregon Laureate Lawson Inada, April 15, 2011. You can find the full text on the Retiree’s Web Site.

Months ago, when I received the invitation to speak about Lawson Inada and his contribution to literature, I immediately said yes. On the one hand, I felt the delight of being given the opportunity to say how much his work matters to me and to other writers. On the other hand, I felt the gravity of having to describe the consequence of his work in our culture, in our aesthetic and literary history, and, greater still, in our collective memory. Many writers have an immediate impact on other writers, but it’s the rare writer whose impact goes beyond academic and literary circles. Lawson is one of those writers. Every other year, at the university where I teach in Tacoma, Washington, I teach a course in Asian-American Literature. During the week that we study the writings that emerged from the Japanese-American internment camps of World War II, I take the students on a field trip. We drive about 10 minutes down Highway 512 to Puyallup and the Puyallup

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The Retirees Association’s FALL LUNCHEON

Judy Howard, Speaker
Friday, October 21, 2011
11:30 am – 1:30 pm
Rogue River Room, SOU

RSVP to Sally Klein by Friday, October 14, 2011
Email (preferred): kleins@sou.edu
Or Telephone: 541-552-6049

LUNCHEON SPEAKER JUDY HOWARD

Judy Howard has operated the Hanson Howard Gallery in Ashland since 1979. She has given a start to many local artists and has introduced Ashland to the work of other Northwest artists. She has often served as a juror for exhibitions throughout the state. During her tenure of twelve years on the Oregon Arts Commission, Judy served as a liaison between the state commission and the Western States Art Federation.

Judy is an accomplished artist and has received various awards, including the Schneider Museum Award of Excellence. She has been introduced as “The ornament of Ashland,” and we are fortunate to have her. ▲



IN MEMORIAM

Joe Brown 1934 – 2011

Harry Cook 1919 -2011

Doug Legg 1930 – 2011

Roger Weeks 1930 --2011

Don Mitchell 1931 – 2011

Full obituaries can be found on
the SOU Retirees Association website.

Personal reminiscences will be included in following issues.



CLAUDE WHITE

by Jerry Insley

Claude and his wife Aggie were a couple who enjoyed working together in building a home or two and also enjoyed the outdoor life. In one instance, which Claude related to me, they had an interesting camping experience on the Little Applegate. They drove to their campsite, backed their vehicle to the river bank and set up camp in front. About the time they had things situated to their satisfaction, they had an unwanted and uninvited visitor; a large black bear.

The bear started walking toward Claude and Aggie and the two beat a hasty retreat to their car. They found that they were in a bit of trouble should they wish to depart the area. Backing up would take them over the bank and into the river, driving forward, over their camp. The bear decided to mount the hood, then climbed to the top of the vehicle and had himself a nice nap.

Claude said that he and Aggie shouted, blew the horn but no amount of noise seemed to affect bruin's slumber. He lay, spread eagled on the car and, according to Claude, snored loud and long. It was literally a matter of hours before the sun began to descend and the bear decided to dismount from his steel perch and depart. He just yawned and ambled off into the woods without so much as a good bye, thanks for the siesta, or whatever.

Students who had taken classes from Claude related that he was a good teacher and a very affable guy. His practical skills in building, and other pursuits he followed, allowed him to relate to a broad spectrum of young people. I'm sure he told them of the bear escapade and that, of course, would attract any audience. I will always remember Claude as a talented and very approachable human being who enjoyed his work and other outlets as well. He will be missed. ▲

TED SCHOPF

By Jerry Insley

Many of us remember our friendly, always smiling and often absent minded Ted Schopf. Oddly enough, he could remember phone numbers from years past but seemingly forgot things that happened hours ago. His students and athletes seized on this idiosyncrasy in short order. Ted would run laps in the gym during foul weather and make a chalk mark on the black board in one corner each time he passed. He knew how many marks to the mile; however, many times a jokester, including some

faculty members, would slip in the door and wipe off a number of marks, leaving Ted to run more than the distance he had planned.

Three of our students, Rick Rennick, Greg McMackin and Carl Nelson, were coming into the building one day and passed by an area where an archery class had been held. They discovered an arrow had slid under the grass and picked it up to turn into the equipment cage. As they were about to enter the building they noticed Ted's truck parked just above them. Knowing Ted, and being creative in hatching up a practical joke, they proceeded to work the arrow through the truck's grill so that it was tightly wedged and barely touching the radiator. They then went to Ted's office.

Ted was seated at his desk and welcomed the sober faced trio. They informed him that they had something to show him that might be bad news. They told him about an arrow stuck in his truck and led him out to view the damage. Ted immediately moved to withdraw the arrow but they cautioned him that if he did so all the coolant would run out. He left the arrow in place and stated that he would "get at it" later on. True to form, Ted forgot the arrow and drove around for a couple of weeks with it sticking out of the grill. Each time Ted pulled up in view of these lads, they would have a good laugh. Finally the humor wore thin and they told him what had happened. Ted laughed as hard as they to discover the joke pulled at his expense.

Ted has since passed away. The boys, Rick, Greg and Carl have all moved on to very successful careers. Rick Rennick is a senior coordinator of course construction for the PGA, Greg McMackin is the head football coach for the University of Hawaii, and Carl Nelson, after achieving the rank of full commander in the Navy, has risen to solid management positions in industry. He is currently president and CEO of a large olive oil pressing plant in California. Ted would be proud. ▲

A Circle of Friends

By Gene Stringer

In March 1985 our family was staying in a compound located in Illigan City in Northern Mindanao, concluding a year in the Philippines supported by the Fulbright program. I was there to teach a 2-week workshop for physics teachers who were gathered from various locations around the island. The daily classes took place at Illigan Institute of Technology which was a short walk from the compound.

One evening we observed a parade passing by on the street outside the compound. On closer examination we noted that the participants wore normal cloths but were marching as soldiers and that they were masked and some carried arms. Our hostess was very nervous and we soon learned that this was not a scheduled parade but an invasion of NPA guerrillas from the surrounding mountains. Her husband, an influential businessman, had been killed by these same folks for being on the wrong side of the confrontation then going on in the Philippines. There had been a pattern of assassinations and hostages taken for ransom in that region along the northern coast of this Muslim dominated part of the country.

Soon they had set up barricades a short distance from our compound and began halting traffic. They tried to tip over a large bus stopped at the check point. Many of the guerrillas carried anti-Marcos/anti-USA signs and slogans. Police officers came to negotiate with the guerillas and it was apparent that tension was growing. If our hostess fled we had no idea what we would do.

Fortunately for me the students in my class recognized the danger of the situation and came to our compound to propose a solution. Each passage through the barricade, morning and evening, they would surround me in a circle of friends. If asked, I was to claim to be Canadian and be prepared to make a “financial contribution” to the guerillas. This plan worked out well. They provided the buffer that was needed and we passed repeatedly through the blockade until it was eventually removed.

We sometimes speak of our “circle of friends” but seldom does one have an experience that provides a more graphic illustration of what friendship really means. For a few days in the spring of 1985, in a strange and exotic place, I had that experience. ▲

Substance

By Priscilla Hunter

Or maybe you could just give up on verbs a while, speak more in nouns, things, even exclaim in foods. Others have. My mother, for example: “Spaghetti!” she would yell out from the kitchen and we knew we would be eating stiff brown meatballs soon but weren’t allowed to groan about it or exclaim. Or my father: “Steak!”, he would come in shouting and our stomachs would sing and gurgle thinking in our way of the blood we would soon gorge on, greedily dipping chunks of bread like gold miners, undeterred by the heat rising from the broiler pan, lurching into the salty puddles, forgetting a little we would soon face our own dry slab of too cooked beef, just the way he loved it.

My one grandfather tried a different tack, bellowing “Sister!” once, that year my parents were in St. Louis getting Daddy some skills useful in the big peace, as I sat on the wide front porch with two wide swings, me in my favorite one, humming, watching pawpaw walk up from the street looking big and serious, and, on seeing me on the swing watching him, holler “Janie, what’s she doing here?”, and scowl at me to get off the swing but no I said

he could sit on the other swing,
and I cried so hard my mawmaw Janie had to stop cooking the boarders’ supper chicken and telephone my grandma Baba, so she could walk a mile or more from all the way the other side of town and take me back home with her, seven years before his cancer, because sister is such a powerful substantive.

My Baba, though, called out “Pie!” and “Lemonade!” when it counted, especially on the 4th of July, back when we all were free.

I’ll try a poem on you now: “Family!”

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Fairgrounds, which was the site of an assembly center where Japanese Americans from Washington and Alaska were held before they were transferred to more permanent camps. From April to September of 1942, more than seven thousand evacuees were held in Puyallup. You will probably enjoy this piece of irony: the Puyallup Assembly Center was named Camp Harmony. When the students and I go on a field trip, the students are always excited: they get to leave campus for a while, and they get to see something real. We arrive in Puyallup and go to the fairgrounds, which are still actively used for events today. When we visit the fairgrounds on a week-day, however, there’s

nothing going on. The place is like a ghost town, or a seaside town at the end of the summer. There’s material evidence of life, but no life itself. And there is no evidence of the seven thousand people who had to live in that place for four months. The students and I walk around for a while, and after fifteen or so minutes of wandering

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Ashland, Oregon 97520

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And there is no evidence of the seven thousand people who had to live in that place for four months. The students and I walk around for a while, and after fifteen or so minutes of wandering and making small talk, I begin to feel the students' boredom. I can imagine what they're asking themselves: what are we doing here? what does this place have to do with the literature we're reading? The students had believed they were going to see something—some kind of proof. Instead, they have taken a field trip to a place that contains absolutely nothing. The lesson here, of course, is a basic but crucial one: the past disappears. And when we read literature, we read literature in the context of that disappearance. In two of his books, *Legends from Camp* and *Drawing the Line*, Lawson Inada does something that no field trip to Puyallup could ever generate in the students' minds: he restores the past, he proves that the past existed, that it was as bright and true as the reality that each of us faces today. Let me give you an example of what I mean by Lawson's ability to restore the past. Here are some lines from his great poem, "Camp." Keep in mind that when Lawson and his family were in the Amache camp in Colorado, Lawson was a boy of six or seven:

*It got so hot in Colorado we would go crazy.
This included, of course, soldiers in uniform, on patrol.
So, once a week, just for relief, they went out for target practice.
We could hear them shooting hundreds of rounds, shouting like crazy.
It sounded like a New Year's celebration. Such fun is not to be missed.
So someone cut a deal, just for the kids, and we went out past the fence.
The soldiers shot, and between rounds, we dug in the dunes for bullets.
It was great fun. They would aim at us, go "Pow!" and we'd shout "Missed!"*

Because I'm a poet, there is one more contribution by Lawson that I feel is especially important. Lawson's work is justly important for the stories and histories that it preserves. But I also want to point out that the craftsmanship in his work is superb—in fact, it's so good that his readers may sometimes take for granted how difficult it is to write a powerful poem. I like to tell my students that poetry is a place where memory, melody, and words gather together. This is certainly true of Lawson's poems, where the weight of memory is always being supported by the lightness of music. To quote Seamus Heaney a poet writes in order "to disobey the force of gravity." Lawson's poems are especially good at this disobedience, because their music is so strong. His poems remind us that we don't experience poetry only in our minds, we also experience it in our whole bodies. Through repetition and rhyming, Lawson's poems remind us of the pulse of our blood and the cadence of our hearts. Through clear and evocative imagery, Lawson's poems remind us of the acuity of our eyes and our imaginations. Through the sensory details of his work,

Lawson reminds us of that we have senses at all. And this is something that I admire so much in Lawson's work: his ability to create communal energy, even though his poems are also intimate, down-to-earth, scaled to the size of my own self. Let me close these remarks by once again quoting from Lawson's work. It has been a great honor to pay tribute to Lawson, and I thank you for listening. The passages I'm going to read are from the poem "Memory," which is my favorite of Lawson's work:

*Memory:
Memory is an old Mexican woman
sweeping her yard with a broom.
She has grown even smaller now,
residing at that vanishing point
decades after one dies,
but at some times, given
the right conditions—
an ordinary dream, or practically
anything in particular—
she absolutely looms,
assuming the stature
she had in the neighborhood...*

*Memory had been there forever.
We settled in around her;
we brought the electricity
of blues and baptized gospel,
ancient adaptations of icons,
spices, teas, fireworks, trestles,
newly acquired techniques
of conflict and healing, common
concepts of collective survival... ▲*