



Retirees Association

Spring Newsletter 2012

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK *by James Dean Outreach*

One of my favorite songs from The Mikado is a duet between Koko and Katisha concerning an obligatory marriage. Koko is a rascal and Katisha an overwhelming older maiden. Koko would like to slip the bonds of matrimony and proposes ingenious arguments, to no good effect. The lyrics, shortened somewhat, go like this:

Koko There is beauty in extreme old age—
 Do you fancy you are elderly enough?
 Is a maiden all the better when she's tough?

Katisha She'll last a good deal longer when she's tough.

Koko Are you old enough to marry, do you think?
 There's a fascination frantic
 In a ruin that's romantic.
 Do you think you are sufficiently decayed?

Katisha I think I am sufficiently decayed.

I, of course, like to think that Association members are "distinguished" rather than sufficiently decayed. But the truth is that we are getting older, and it will come as no surprise to you that the Board has been encouraged to devise a strategy for bringing younger retirees into the organization. We will propose how this might be done during a brief business meeting at the

Spring Luncheon. We will also propose a slate of new board members for your approval.

Membership

My wallet is a disgrace, not because it lacks money or is falling apart, but because it is stuffed full of membership cards, many of them from groups with which I have only the most tenuous connections. I need to do some wallet cleaning.

Happily, The Retirees Association does not currently issue membership cards. We know, of course, who our members are and are happy not to send any membership cards to clutter up wallets. However, we do encourage you to renew (see insert) for the 2012-13 year if you are currently a member. If you've been thinking of joining but have not yet done so, we cordially invite you to. Only \$20, and that can be a passport to good fellowship, nice luncheons, stimulating speakers, and a continuing connection to the institution we served so long. If you wish, you can renew at the Spring Luncheon. Those unable to attend can send in the form to Sally Klein, OLLI, SOU, 1250 Siskiyou Blvd, Ashland, OR 97520 by June 15, 2012.

Scholarship

A fellow member of the Association has approached me with a proposal. She/he is willing to provide matching scholarship money, up to \$1000.00, during the remainder of this calendar year. So if you have a charitable yen, we can get closer to our goal of \$25,000 for the Association's scholarship. ▲

The Retirees Association's SPRING LUNCHEON

President Mary Cullinan will be the featured speaker at the Association's Spring Term Luncheon/President's Reception, on May 25 (Friday), 11:30. She will tell us about institutional progress, promising initiatives, and encouraging developments at the University, as well as discuss challenges and difficulties. You've likely noted that SOU has been much in the news lately. For the fourth consecutive year the University has been obliged to cut budgets and trim staff, never a cheerful or morale boosting exercise. Then there are the issues surrounding Jefferson Public Radio and the JPR Listener's Guild. We look forward to having Mary sort it all out for us.

May 25, 11:30 am – 1:30 pm, Rogue River Room

RSVP to Sally Klein by May 18, 2011

Email (preferred): KleinS@sou.edu Or Telephone: 541-552-6049

MY FIRST TRIP TO ITALY

By Ed Hungerford

My European traveling days are probably over now, but I can recall ten or eleven times that Sheila and I have touched down in Italy, on either a short trip (for us, two weeks), or for several months, on a sabbatical leave. But Carol McNair suggested that I write about my first trip to Italy, and the idea appealed to me to call that era up, from a long time ago. That first trip, when I was twenty-one, came courtesy of the U.S. Army. I had put in three years at a liberal arts college, and I was a journalist—had been the editor of the college newspaper. If not a journalist, then I would become a poet, or possibly a novelist. I had no anti-

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CORRECTION

The Newsletter regrets that the Dan Bulkley article was placed under the In Memoriam heading in the Fall issue. We have just had this information from Jerry Insley:

Dan Bulkley's 95th birthday is in May. He informed me that he is getting back into the Master's Program in track and field. At age 95 he competes in the bottom tier of those 95 to 100 years of age and, according to Dan, he won't have to compete with the kids who are merely 90. This gives him a big advantage by being on the younger age of his peer group. He is getting more and more like the Energizer Bunny. He just keeps going and going and going. ▲

DON MITCHELL

Excerpted From The Mail Tribune

by Buffy Pollock

A retired teacher known for speaking his mind in the classroom and at City Hall for some six decades passed away Sunday doing what he loved best, watering his trees.

Known for passing out hundreds of dahlias each summer to friends, neighbors and local businesses, longtime Phoenix resident Don Mitchell recently was featured in the Mail Tribune for his opposition to the city converting his neighborhood city water supply, after years of being served by a local water district. While he spoke his mind when issues arose, Mitchell's family members remember his "quiet wisdom" and his sense of humor.

Mitchell's wife of 56 years, Eunice Mitchell said, while her husband was stubborn about issues he cared about, he always wanted to help others. Neighborhood children without a park were allowed to use a portion of his 3-acre property and local agencies in need always received fresh vegetables, colorful dahlias and other types of help from Mitchell.

A resident of Cheryl Lane for nearly six decades, Mitchell bought his once-barren parcel of land in the early 1950s, sending money home to his parents to make the payments while he served in the Korean War. Once home from the war, Mitchell and his family turned a star-thistle-laden property into a lush homestead where they planted 300 trees and raised five children.

Born in Elbowoods, N.D., on Dec. 28, 1931, Mitchell grew up next door to his future wife, Eunice; the couple were born a year apart on the same day. "I've never been without him, except for when he was in Korea," she said.

During and after earning his doctorate in education from the University of Northern Colorado in Greeley, Mitchell taught for more than three decades at Lone Pine Elementary, Phoenix High School and Southern Oregon University.

Mitchell's granddaughter, Samantha Mitchell of Medford, said her grandfather, who never slowed down in retirement, was "one of those people that could see the beauty in everything and laugh at the stupid. This fall, we'll dig up and package his dahlia tubers to give away, just as he would have wanted." ▲

Retirement In 4/4 Time

by Ron Bolstad

As retirees we have often been advised that we should challenge ourselves in retirement in order to keep our minds, bodies, and social relationships vibrant. Four years into retirement from SOU I decided to dust off the guitar retained from my youth. Months prior, I had finally come to grips with the fact that I had stored my old guitar for all these years, that I wasn't motivated to play it, and I should refurbish it before passing it on to one of my sons. I did so just at the point that I heard the Fiddlers perform at the Jackson County fair. I convinced myself that with a lot of practice, I could do that! This was such a jolt to my comfort zone that it took ten months to get the courage to attend a Grange Hall jam of the local Oregon Old-Time Fiddlers group. I was warmly welcomed on the spot! And so it has gone, with almost weekly lessons from a patient teacher and much encouragement from family and friends, and of course the Fiddlers themselves.

The Oregon Old-Time Fiddlers Association is a statewide organization whose purpose is to preserve and promote old-time music and fiddling. Our repertoire includes acoustic presentation of waltzes, rags, hoedowns, jigs, traditional country songs, and old popular standards. One does not have to be old or a fiddler to participate in the monthly, public Grange Hall jams and perform at retirement and assisted living residences, children's festivals, and other special events. It was a treat for a number of us to play for the Retirees Association at its fall 2011 luncheon.

While performing in a variety of venues and learning the old-time tunes has stretched me, other opportunities have challenged me even further. For three years I have been asked by our district's champion fiddler to accompany her at the state contest. A first place in 2011 in the senior category was especially gratifying.

Another rewarding experience involved my accompanying and providing vocals on the three CD's that local rancher, singer, and fiddler Don Maddox recorded recently. The first CD was selected as best "Old-Time Music CD of the Year" by the Rural Roots Music Commission based in Iowa. Don is the last surviving member of the Maddox Brothers and Rose band of the 40's and 50's.

Learning new music, meeting new people, and providing enjoyment to others has enriched these retirement years. Doing so seems light years away from juggling meager budgets and attending the inevitable committee meetings that characterized my administrative years at SOU, both challenging and rewarding in their own right ▲.

**Excerpt from Boat, a Memoir of Friendship, Faith, Death, and Life Everlasting,
to be published by Arcade Publishing, New York, in June.**

by Mike Baughman

Every Christmas afternoon the beachboys gathered to drink Primo Beer, play their ukuleles and sing under the hau tree on the beach between the Outrigger Club and Moana Hotel.

On this occasion they sat in a loose circle around three metal washtubs containing stubby brown Primo bottles immersed in water and floating hunks of ice. I noticed that a map of the islands was printed on the Primo labels.

A favorite beachboy song was Manuela Boy, and I remember the verses they sang that caused the trouble:

*I want to marry this wahine I know
Her name is Haunani Ho
I told my papa and he said no
Haunani is your sister but your mama don't know*

*I told my mama what my papa had said
She said no hila hila
You can marry Haunani Ho
Your papa's not your papa but your papa don't know*

As the beachboys laughed a haole tourist emerged from a small crowd of onlookers. He was a skinny pink-faced middle-aged man dressed in Bermuda shorts and a long-sleeved white shirt, and he hurried across the sand from where he had been watching and stopped next to Boat, who was the first beachboy he came to.

Without preliminaries, he launched into what amounted to a sermon. He asked Boat if he knew it was Christmas Day, the day of the birth of our Lord. He said that, because they were drinking alcohol and singing songs about infidelity and incest on Christmas, the beachboys were blasphemers.

Boat heard him out, than handed his ukulele to Turkey and stood. With his customary smile, he looked down at

the tourist. "We're having our own fun, Mister," he said. "Leave us alone here on our beach. No hard feelings. We having fun is all. You run along now."

The tourist, whose pink face had darkened to red, pointed at Boat, almost touching his chest with an index finger. He called Boat a sinner who was disgracing the Christian God and everything He stood for.

Boat reached out with one big hand, grasped the top of the tourist's head and lifted him off the ground, as easily as a player with a big enough hand can palm and lift a basketball.

"Mister, I could crush your head like an egg," Boat said. "Maybe I will."

The tourist's feet were a foot off the sand, and his skinny knobby-kneed legs began to tremble. The pink face that had darkened to red with rage turned suddenly pale with dread.

Nobody said a word or made a sound. It was late afternoon, and Boat had downed plenty of Primo by then. His bright eyes narrowed, his face tightened with anger, and I thought he might do it.

But he smiled again and simply dropped the haole tourist, who collapsed in a trembling heap.

"You run along now," Boat said. "Move your scrawny ass."

The tourist lay there on his side for several seconds that seemed longer. When he finally gathered himself he pushed to his feet and sprinted, really sprinted, across the parking lot to a side door into the Moana.

After he had disappeared into the hotel the beachboys laughed long and loud before launching into another verse of Manuela Boy. ▲

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war feelings, since my family saw the fight against Hitler as inevitable, a just war

So I enlisted in the Army—I couldn't qualify for the vision test in Navy or Air Force applications. In May of 1943 a large convoy of ships took thousands of troops to Casablanca, just as the North African war was virtually finished. This was now the staging area, in Africa, for the coming Italian campaign. We reached the area of Tunisia a month later.

There on the Mediterranean shore we pitched our tents and shelter halves awaiting orders. We enjoyed the summer at

Bizerte, north of Tunis, where the huge open harbor housed dozens of troop ships, and where at night we could see, following the tracer bullets in the sky, the amazing night battles between German planes coming to bomb, and Allied planes..

The Allies chose to fight the Sicilian campaign, a first step to the Italian mainland battles, partly because a much larger invasion (Normandy) could not be mounted safely until twelve months later, as it turned out. The Sicilian campaign, finished in 38 days, went swiftly, probably because of the American General George Patton, the driving force behind this invasion, using

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battalions of tanks. The British and other Allied troops in eastern Sicily had harder fighting and could not succeed quickly with their assignments.

So we have now reached the start of “My First Trip to Italy.” I was to spend 24 months in Italy, most of it educational and somewhat enjoyable—though not under ideal conditions. What was my reaction, then, to being overseas on foreign soil? Not exhilaration, certainly. Everything I saw around me was new, but within the context of Army rules. A soldier’s life is boring and confining, consisting mainly of waiting, when nothing happens

My job in the Army was that of a radio operator who intercepted enemy messages. We copied code in hand written pencil. Radio operators worked short shifts—six hours per day six days a week. We had plenty of time for sightseeing or just loafing and reading.

I had found a fellow soldier whose parents had sent him a Baedeker’s Guide to Italy. Our units were stationed about 20 miles from the largest city, Palermo. We studied the book evenings and found that the main cathedral in Palermo had royal tombs, perhaps a Renaissance pulpit and maybe several stained glass windows from medieval times.

We would sign up for a day pass at company headquarters and hitch a ride on one of the trucks that went into the city daily. Over a five month period I learned to admire the architecture and styles of decoration. Often there are spectacular mosaics built into the walls. The Normans came to Sicily in the 11th century and built magnificent cathedrals. At Monreale, Cefalu, and elsewhere these Norman buildings still stand and serve as places of worship.

At Monreale, a kind of suburb on a hill, only eight or ten miles by bus from central Palermo, a Norman cathedral—11th Century and very little changed—of smaller size than Palermo’s church but greater magnificence, to my thinking, lay waiting for the

discerning tourist. I was alone on this day trip, and the small, lesser-known city, little more than a village, made for a quiet scene. I wandered about the cathedral’s interior and saw that on the walls many familiar Bible stories had been depicted in fresh, bright mosaics—entire walls, not just pictures placed in frames. A great experience.

Sicily has wonderful Greek temples, several of which on the southern seacoast are so well preserved that they rival anything that survives today in Greece itself. The small city of Agrigento proudly shows its six or seven temples, intact except for missing roofs. Unfortunately, restrictions on enlisted men’s travel prevented me from seeing these wonderful temples in 1943.

So, when my wife and I traveled to Italy and Sicily thirty-odd years later, I was fulfilling an inspiration for Italian art and architecture that had started with my experience in World War II. We did rent a car then in Rome, both in 1986 and 1989, saw the temples in Agrigento, and several other locations (Segesta, Selinunte), and were reintroduced to the superb architecture of the Normans in Sicily and elsewhere in southern Italy near Bari. It took those eight or ten additional trips to satisfy my fascination with Italian art, architecture and painting. My Army life in my twenties had introduced me to a lifelong area of study and enjoyment. ▲

If life seems to be giving you melons, you may be dyslexic.

ARBITRATOR: A cook that leaves Arby’s to work at McDonalds.

AVOIDABLE: what a bullfighter tried to do.

BURGLARIZE: what a crook sees with.

CONTROL: A short, ugly inmate

ECLIPSE: what an English barber does for a living.