

Staying Connected

PCC Retirees Association

Oct 2014

Trip to Turkey Proves to Be a Delight

Our tour group arrived by bus in the picturesque Aegean coastal city of Kusadasi, not far from Ephesus, the most famous archaeological site in Turkey. We had already spent a week in Turkey visiting well known tourist sites in Istanbul we had heard about—Hagia Sophia, the Blue Mosque, Topkapi Palace, the Grand Bazaar.

We had also visited Cappadocia in central Turkey, and mostly recently, Ephesus, the jewel in the crown of Turkish archaeology. In addition to the visual delights of these places, we had also tasted some of the wonderful culinary delights for which Turkey has become famous.

For most of us, the high point of the trip thus far had been a hot air balloon glide over picturesque villages and fairy tale rock formations in Cappadocia, “land of the people with horses.” To travel here we had flown from Istanbul to Kayseri and then driven an hour to our Cave Hotel—some rooms are caves—in the village of Urgup at dinner our tour leader told us to be ready by 4 a.m. the next morning for our balloon ride.

Before sunrise, we were on our way to the balloon-launching site. As we arrived, huge flames of heated propane gas were rising into several balloons. It must be safe, I assured myself, or our tour company wouldn't be letting us do this, right?

After our balloon was fully expanded, we were told to climb aboard. Most of us boarded on our own, but a few with short legs were hefted into the basket by the muscular crew. Once aboard, our pilot Mustafa, introduced himself and put us at our ease by making jokes about his qualifications. “You don't need to worry, he said, I am a fully qualified pilot. I just received my certificate yesterday—over the internet.”

Soon we were noiselessly gliding over small villages. One of the villages was where Mustafa grew up and where his parents still lived. We waved as we passed over but no one was up yet. In between the villages, were clusters of fairytale chimney rock formations, caused by ancient volcanic eruptions. Scores of other balloons were now floating in the air, some so close they were almost touching. “That's called kissing,” said Mustafa. While floating over a valley of chimney rocks, he asked: “Do you want to go down for a closer look?” Yes, yes, we all said. And soon the balloon descended smoothly. Small groups of people waved at us from below.

As our gliding came to an end, Mustafa told us to prepare for the landing by holding on tightly to the sides of the gondola. As the gondola hit the ground, it bounded a few times and was then quickly subdued by the ground crew.

Soon after we landed, Mustafa appeared behind a table with bottles of Turkish bubbly and champagne glasses. We toasted him for his excellent piloting skills— as well as our safe return to earth. The day was filled with other activities, including lunch at a home of the matriarch of a small village, but the balloon ride remains the memorable event of the day.

Sadly, we later learned that our young pilot, Mustafa, had died in a freak accident a few weeks after our balloon ride. A jeep overturned in which he was a passenger.

Another high point of the trip was our visit to a Turkish bath while at the lovely coastal resort of Kusadasi. The bath was optional; most of the women went but just two of us guys decided to take the plunge. As we walked down an alley toward the Rina Turkish Bath, I heard one of the women nervously ask: “Do we have to get naked,” I thought to myself, how else are you going to get bathed? I should mention that most of the people on this tour of Turkey were Asian-American women from Oahu. Nearly all of them were retired and many were high school friends who had later taught at high schools in Waikiki.

After changing into robes, Ren, the other guy, and I each took a shower and then were shown to a sauna where we steamed for 15 minutes to relax our muscles. Afterwards, we were shown into a large marble bathroom that could have held several more people. After a few minutes, a hefty Turkish woman, Elena, came in, and pointed at Ren as if to say, “You first.”

He lay down on the marble slab where he was sitting, a towel wrapped around his waist. Soon Elena began slinging huge dollops of suds over his back using a cloth resembling a pillowcase filled with suds. I watched somewhat bemused, as Ren’s entire body, except for his head, was completely submerged in suds.

Elena then scrubbed him vigorously on both sides with a loofah. She followed the scrubbing with a massage. Each time she pushed her large hands on his back, Ren let out a slight moan. When finished, she motioned for him to stand up, whereupon she poured a basin of water over his head, first warm, then cold. She winked at me as she pored over the cold water; Ren shuddered from the shock. He left the room for the next station. And now I was next.

I especially enjoyed being wrapped within the comfort of the warm suds. Lena also scrubbed me vigorously with a loofah and put her full weight into the massage that followed. Elena reminded of the phrase that travel commentator Michael Palin applied to Turkish masseurs: “most masseurs are men of few words but many pounds.” Elena was a woman but the rest of the comment applies.

What now I wondered? Soon a younger, slimmer, and more attractive woman entered and led me to another room where there was a massage table on which she indicated I should lie down on my stomach. “Merhaba,” (hello) I said. “Merhaba” she replied. “What

is your name,” I asked. “Anna,” she said. “Mine is Alan.” She then left the room for several minutes. I felt somewhat awkward with my head fixed into an uncomfortable headrest at the end of the table.

When Anna finally returned, I lifted up my head to see her pouring oil on her hands. She then began to massage my back, legs and feet. Though I wanted to look at her, I could only see her bare feet padding about the table. Her hands were strong. To show my appreciation of her massage I said, “Cok guzel,” (very nice), which used can also mean very beautiful. She laughed and said something that I didn’t understand. I said the phrase again before she dug her elbow into my back, after which stood up on my back. I didn’t know the word for painful, but I did think of the phrase, “chok para,” meaning too much, as in the price is too high.

After finishing with my back, she said to turn over, which I did somewhat awkwardly, trying to position the towel to cover what needed to be. This part of the massage caused me to tense my muscles, especially as her hands worked their way up my legs. “Softer,” she said, which I took to mean, relax. I tried but my mind kept thinking, “I’m ticklish right there.”

After the legs, she moved to the head of the table, poured some more oil into her hands, and began to rub my stomach, another ticklish area. As she stretched to move her hands down my stomach, she leaned her breasts on my face. They were covered, but nevertheless— there they were. I kept thinking, “Cok guzel,” but kept the words to myself.

Despite the pleasure of the massage, it was with some relief when Anna finished her ministrations. But before dismissing me to the showers, she spread a thick cream on my face, which hardened into a mask. When I looked in a mirror, the image I saw reminded me of a native witch doctor from the pages of National Geographic.

During our two weeks in Turkey, we encountered other delights besides the balloon ride and Turkish bath. Our tour was billed as a culinary/culture tour, so we were delighted by the wonderful cuisine that most of us had never tasted. Istanbul now has a number of chefs with international reputations.

Should you visit Istanbul, you must try the Meze By Lemon Tree restaurant of Gencay Ucok, across the street from the Pera Palace hotel. Gencay, owner and chef, combines traditional Turkish flavors with a flourish. His small restaurant is usually fully booked, so make reservations early.

PCC Gets a New President AGAIN

The president’s office at Pasadena City College has a new tenant again. The move came after Dr. Mark Rocha retired at the end of August.

Bob Miller, the former assistant superintendent and vice president for business and college services, will fill in on an interim basis until the Board of Trustees finds a permanent replacement.

The board has not had a very good record for choosing presidents since Dr. James Kossler retired after spending 19 years at the college with 12 years as president. Miller will be the fourth president in the last seven years.

The presidential musical chairs began when Dr. Paulette Perfumo was chosen to replace Kossler in 2007, even though her name did not appear on the list of the top four candidates selected after a six-month search.

After a dismal performance as president, Perfumo was paid for one year of her contract by being allowed to work as a special projects administrator for the college from her home in Northern California. As an added perk from the board, she got to keep the \$54,000 Cadillac DeVille that she purchased with a car allowance provided by the district.

Dr. Lisa Sugimoto, vice president of student and learning services, was next to step in as interim president in 2009. Unlike Perfumo, Sugimoto's name was one of the top four selected to replace Kossler. The board appointed Sugimoto as the interim president, but first she had to agree not to seek the permanent position. Even though faculty, staff and students urged board members to keep Sugimoto on as the permanent president, they appointed Dr. Mark Rocha to the top spot in 2010.

Rocha's time as president was tumultuous from the start. He started butting heads with faculty over issues that normally would have been resolved by Shared Governance. Rocha, however, did not like Shared Governance and often ignored what the faculty and staff recommended.

The cancellation of the Winter Intersession caused an even bigger rift. This time students joined faculty and staff to protest the schedule change which would leave many students unable to transfer units to four-year colleges in time for the fall term. However, Rocha never backed down and the Winter Intersession stayed off the schedule while he was president.

Morale at the college was tumbling, but it hit an all-time low when everything the staff suggested was disregarded by the administration.

The faculty took two votes of no confidence in Rocha, and the Associated Students voted no confidence as well. However, the board of trustees continued to blame a disgruntled faculty for the college's problems.

Rocha gave PCC one black eye after another in the community, but the board members responded by extending his contract through 2017.

Negative stories about PCC went international when Oscar winning screenwriter Dustin Lance Black agreed to be this year's commencement speaker only to have the invitation withdrawn because the college was concerned about its reputation after the board heard about a stolen sex tape featuring Black. The administration eventually apologized to Black and invited him again. He accepted the apology and agreed to speak.

In addition to the negative stories that made the news, a lot of employees' lives were irrevocably changed during Rocha's tenure when they were put on administrative leave without warning and then just disappeared from the college.

When Rocha officially retired on Aug.31, he took with him a paycheck from the Board of Trustees and the taxpayers for \$403,826 plus an added \$16,000 to pay for his legal fees.

Now enter Bob Miller who has a big job to do between now and when yet another president is hired.

Miller graduated from PCC in 1975, and he worked full time at the college until 1985 when he left to take a position with Intelcom, a telecommunications company. He served as vice president of marketing, sales and member services for more than 19 years.

Miller returned to education and PCC in 2005 as associate dean of academic support. Four years later, he was named interim dean of educational services. From there he moved to vice president of educational services, and then to assistant superintendent and senior vice president of business and college services.

Miller has a BA in administration, business from the University of LaVerne, an MPA in public administration from Cal Poly Pomona, and a doctorate of public administration from LaVerne.

In an interview with the Courier, Miller pledged to improve communication on campus. He said the college has a lot of work to do. "I believe that together we have the opportunity to make PCC better than it ever was," Miller said. "I pledge myself to this effort."

The next move belongs to the Board.

A CloseUpLook at the American West

For most of my teaching career, I was fortunate to be able to take students on field trips through much of the American West, involving Indian reservations, archaeological sites, museums, etc. My wife, Ceci, decided that it was about time we took the family, including grandchildren and friends Robert and Lily Bowman on one of these trips—through the Rocky Mountains—in June, one of the best months to go.

Anyone who travels through the West will appreciate the inherent beauty of the landscape, the geological record with its colorful strata that reflect the history of the earth, the amazing legacy our forbearers have left us in the form of the national park system, and the rich cultural traditions that continue to exist among Native Americans.

The first stops on our journey were Cedar Breaks and Bryce Canyon in Utah, testaments to the erosive power of ice and wind that has resulted in amphitheaters, canyons, spires, walls and cliffs in glorious red, orange and yellow. The spires at Bryce are called “hoodoos” and have been likened by Native Americans and colonists to ghostly humans frozen in time as a punishment for their sins.

These canyons are called “amphitheaters” because of their shape. When you are looking at one, it is as if you are standing on the edge of a balcony peering down, with the taller spires being closer and the more eroded, shorter ones farther away. Eventually, as nature takes its course, the ground below you will erode into new spires while the pinnacles farthest away will disappear. In other words, these amphitheaters are constantly on the move—in the direction behind you. Eventually, because you are looking eastward, the amphitheater will move inexorably to the western edge of the Colorado Plateau. Bryce is a great example of how geology helps us to understand what has happened before—and what will happen in the future.

Driving up scenic highway 12, we moved on to Green River, a desolate town whose only reason for existence seems to be as a truck stop along Interstate 70—except for the fact that it has the wonderful John Wesley Powell Museum, dedicated to the explorations by its namesake of the Green and Colorado Rivers. The technology of the time is on display, including historic boats and full-scale replicas, while a video conveys the risks involved in exploring unknown lands and, in many places, treacherous waters.

Continuing north on SR6/191, we proceeded to Price, Utah, home of the College of Eastern Utah Prehistoric Museum, half of which is devoted to Paleolithic hunter-gathers and their prey, including mammoths and mastodons, while the other half is devoted to dinosaurs found in the area (although most of those found by the university paleontologists are on display in other museums around world).

Former museum director, Don Burge, liked to recount to my students the time when Steven Spielberg called him for advice on how to portray the raptors in his new movie, “Jurassic Park.” Don was chagrined when he found that Spielberg made his raptors twice as large as any actually found. In the long run, it didn’t matter because, as everyone knows, the movie made a ton of money and, just after it was released, a raptor was found that matched the size of the one in the movie! (And, by the way, Steven Spielberg never sent the museum the donation he had promised.)

Dinosaur National Monument in northeastern Utah is fascinating because of its display of thousands of dinosaur bones embedded in a hillside where they were originally found—with the visitor’s center built around it.

South Pass City, Wyoming (situated at the south end of the Wind River Mountains is a restored gold-mining town of the 19th century in a beautiful setting with a brook running through it. One can walk through rooming houses, bars and even a billiard hall with the original elaborately carved table. There is much that is original here, including a gold processing plant with some of the machinery still running. (The dream is to have the plant fully functioning once again.)

Taking S.R. 287 north through the beautiful Wind River Reservation (home of the Shoshone and Arapaho, our next destination was Jackson Wyoming, the take-off point for a river-rafting trip with the Grant Tetons as our backdrop.

Moving north to Yellowstone National Park, we spent two days (the absolute minimum) to see geysers (including Old Faithful) sulfur springs, waterfalls and wildlife, including bison, moose and elk— no bears this time—and, of course, the amazing recovery from the fires of 1988. They say it will take 100 years for Yellowstone to return to the way it was, but a video shows how very few animals died in the fires and how the regeneration process began almost immediately afterwards. We were also made aware of the fact that we were visiting an active volcano that could blow at any time. Knowing that geological processes occur in very slow motion and optimist that I am, I figured that we could get out in time.

Traveling east from Yellowstone, we visited Cody, whose primary features are the Irma Hotel and the Buffalo Bill museum. At the Irma, we were lucky enough to be invited in to see the Irma suite by a patron that happened to be staying there. Irma was the daughter of Buffalo Bill and the hotel is still its largely original, creaky self. The museum is actually five museums in one (the entry ticket is good for two days), including the Buffalo Bill museum, the gun museum, the museum of Western art, the American Indian museum and the natural history museum.

Crossing the Big Horn Mountains, we visited Devil's Tower (a flat-topped piece of rock that rises over 1200 ft. and featured in another Spielberg movie, "Close Encounters").

Moving on to South Dakota, we visited the town of Deadwood. Once the commercial center of the Black Hills, the entire Victorian city has been restored and is on the National Historic Register. Deadwood is also a jumping-off point for visits to Mt. Rushmore, the Monument being built in honor of Crazy Horse. Begun in 1947 and at least many decades away from completion, the rock sculpted feature is so big that all of the presidents on Rushmore would fit inside the head of the Sioux warrior.

In the southern part of the Black Hills, we took in (or were taken into) Jewel Cave (whose name is self-explanatory) and The Mammoth Site of Hot Springs where excavations continue to recover ice age mammoths and mastodons trapped in a deep waterhole. Of course, the animals were all males, since females with their young apparently knew better. A permanent visitor's center, including a laboratory and museum, has been built around the working site. Guided tours are available.

Our trip home included a stop to view pictographs that have been made famous for providing “evidence” for some observers that our planet has been visited by aliens. The site is not marked, so that finding them is only possible by word-of-mouth. If our national park system is a reflection of our humanity at its best, the bullet holes in the Native American images from a thousand years ago show us at our worst.

Postscript: We did not do everything I used to do with students for lack of time (19 days instead of 22) and I have not included everything that we did, even on this trip, for the sake of brevity. I would gladly make available the original PCC itinerary for anyone interested. I also have two separate itineraries (11 days each) for the American Southwest for anyone interested. Who knows? Ceci might even talk the family and me into taking those trips once again and I would have to write new reports.

Visiting Margaret Mead’s Samoa

By Joanne Kim

After an eventful winter of surgeries and daily hospital visits, my husband Myron and I thought about taking it all lightly and going away to some happy, care-free places. When we got a flyer for a 29-day getaway cruise from San Pedro and back, with no air-hassle, do-what-you-want ocean cruise to Hawaii Islands and the South Pacific, we decided it would be our timely break, and we just jumped on it. So, our month-long voyage began on Myron’s birthday.

The voyage ran destination stops at four major islands of Hawaii and five exotic island hops in the South Pacific — Samoa (formally Western Samoa), American Samoa, Moorea, Tahiti, and Bora Bora. Of course, all along, a vision danced in my mind of seeing Paul Gauguin’s strong and vibrant color paintings in Tahiti and re-visiting Margaret Mead’s Samoan world as she portrayed it in her field reports. Mead went to Samoa at the age of 24 and her book, *Coming of Age in Samoa* was published in 1928. Nearly nine decades after her first visit, we were touring Samoa in her footsteps. The Princess ship, with over 3000 passengers and a crew of 1,500, sailed smoothly, crossing the equator and navigating the vast South Pacific Ocean waters after leaving Hawaii, docking at Apia, Samoa’s capital, first of its many ports of call.

Samoa is the first independent country in the South Pacific since 1962. A Dutchman first sighted Samoan islands in 1722 and then the first Christian missionary John Williams of London Missionary Society was dispatched in 1830. After nine years of peaceful and productive missionary activities, Williams was sacrificed by some cannibals. Margaret Mead talks about some of the Samoan girls staying with Christian pastors and getting educated.

Mead visited Samoa almost a century ago, and the villages still retain much of their small and old looks. Our guide told us that it is not uncommon for a Samoan family of

three or four generations to dwell together in the same house. Some of these houses still have no form of room divides inside.

In these environments, the life of a family looks pretty much a continuation of an old-style communal or group living.

Notwithstanding these still-remaining traditional ways, there are a markedly high number of Christian churches throughout the island, with each village having at least a church or two.

In addition, each village has an impressive, large round covered-roof structure that seems to serve as a community meeting place. The structure has no walls since Samoa is in a tropical zone. We saw churches of many different Christian denominations: Catholic, Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, LDS, etc. Statistics show that fully 95 percent of Samoans are said to be Christians and one wonders whether Samoans' warm hospitality and kind personal characteristics are due to the Christian teachings or their innate personal traits.

In *Coming of Age*, Mead states Samoans preserve their own cultural, ethical heritage in their Christian teachings. It is fair to say, therefore, that most Samoan girls see no mental struggle over their tradition and the western culture. They are just happy with their lives.

Of course, the dirt roads that Margaret described have disappeared. Buses, vans, trucks, taxis run briskly throughout the island taking advantage of the many paved roads. Scenes of many villages dot the landscape around the island; we were lucky enough to tour them. One can see many schools with many students wearing Joanne snapped this photo of Myron in front of the Robert uniforms.

Although we were told that the government subsidizes eight years of public education, we could not tell whether those children in uniforms are public school or parochial school students. Our guide informed that unemployment is still a big issue that has been dogging the nation for a long time. Some lucky ones work for the government while many youngsters just relax sitting under the shade or swimming or surfing as there are not enough jobs for them.

We headed a he winding road through forests and spectacular ocean views, finally arriving at Vailima, a foothill town up the mountain where Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-1894) built a mansion halfway on the Vaea Mountain. Of course, Stevenson's Treasure Island is his best-known work which brought him world fame and good fortune.

I knew that one cannot separate Stevenson's work from his propensity for travel and adventure. I also knew that this seafaring writer/adventurer travelled widely in the Pacific Ocean. But I didn't know he built a mansion and died in Samoa. He was a sickly child and never enjoyed a good health in adulthood. As the Scottish winters were so harsh and unforgiving, he moved to Hawaii with his American wife, Fanny. That was

followed by a further journey to Samoa to re-locate as the native Hawaiian queen, so the story goes, tried to win his heart.

Stevenson was a good story-teller but also he was evidently a good listener, listened good to his wife who suggested the move to the South Pacific. The tropical temperature and moisture helped his asthmatic condition.

In 1889 Stevenson paid \$4,000 and purchased 400 acres of property in the foothills of Mount Vaea, where he built a large, imposing mansion.

His time there was happy and productive. He wrote nine books in four years. His study faced the ocean and cool breezes touched all his skin as they still do for visiting tourists.

It was the most magnificent home in all of Samoa, so much so that the governor of Samoa lived there before independence. Stevenson was revered as “Tusistala (Teller of Tales)” by the islanders and politicians alike.

Stevenson was always afraid of having long illness, but on Dec. 3, 1894 he suffered a stroke after a long day of writing and died shortly afterwards. Before his death he wrote to a friend in London, saying “I have had splendid life of it, grudging nothing, regret very little . . . would hardly change any more of my time.” He is buried about a mile up from the mansion, with his beloved boots by his side per his wishes. The memorial script he penned for his tombstone reads:

Dig the grave and let me lie. Glad did I live and gladly die. And I laid me down with a will. This be the verse you grave for me. Here he lies where he longed to be Home is the sailor, home from the sea. And the hunter home from the hill.

The estate, called Villa Vailima, is now a Robert Louis Stevenson Museum and is open to the public.

Scholarship Recipient Tells How PCC and Support from Retirees Association Changed His Life

By Alan Lamson

The Foundation Board heard PCC student, Marcus Franco, speak about his difficulties as an ex-felon as well as the success he has enjoyed at PCC in the Auto Technology program, which he has now completed. He is now working on his general education requirements; he expects to graduate in the spring of next year.

Marcus was introduced by Alan Lamson, chair of Retirees’ Scholarship Committee that has awarded Marcus an Osher Scholarship for two years in a row. Lamson said that “when the Foundation office said that we could renew our Osher scholarship for the same student, I asked our scholarship committee if they would want to select Marcus for

a second year. They enthusiastically agreed that we should. And the entire Board approved.”

Marcus expressed his great appreciation for the two Osher scholarships awarded to him. He said it felt so good that others believed in him. He also spoke about his wonderful experiences as a student at PCC, where he has earned his Auto Technology Certificate, maintaining a 3.8 grade average. He has always loved cars and electronics and is a skilled auto technician and welder. Some day he hopes to open his own business.

Marcus dropped out of high school in Wyoming at 16 because he got a girl pregnant and had to get a full-time job to support her and his daughter. At 18 he discovered he had cancer and underwent multiple surgeries in Los Angeles. He is still recovering from the cancer.

While in Los Angeles, he was involved in an accident where another person was killed. Though the accident wasn't his fault, he was charged with involuntary manslaughter and given a sentence of over six years.

While in prison, he earned his G.E.D. and volunteered as a clerk for the prison. Despite the many negative influences in prison, including gangs and the mistreatment by the guards, he kept telling himself that he needed to stay positive in order to turn his life around once he got out.

Especially moving was his comment about how he and other inmates divided up books to read, even copies of Reader's Digest, since there weren't enough to go around. There were, he said, few positive influences in prison but these books were treasured.

While still under prison authorities, he was accepted for the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection and trained as a fire fighter, a job he loved because it allowed him out of his prison cell and gave him some valuable job experience.

It was during this time, just before he got discharged, that he learned he was approved to go to Pasadena City College. Being at PCC, he said, has turned his life around and given him a second chance.

Despite the difficulties of his life—the cancer and his prison sentence—Marcus said he keeps a positive outlook about his future. “Some doors have been closed to me,” he said, once people know he was in prison, but “other doors have opened up” as a result of his experiences at PCC on the positive side, he has recently been discharged as a model parolee. “I am determined to continue and finish my studies for a better future not only for myself but for my daughter as well.”

Knowing his story, who wouldn't want to help Marcus Franco?

President Lonnie Schield hugged Marcus after his presentation, which was greeted by enthusiastic applause from the audience.

We Want to Hear from You

If you enjoy reading about the trips of other retirees, you can bet everyone would like to hear about your travels. If you haven't been traveling, how about letting everyone know what you are doing these days. Sometimes we lose track of our friends after they've retired, so it's always nice to find out what's keeping them busy.

You can send a typed copy to Mikki Bolliger c/o PCC Retirees Association, 1570 E. Colorado Boulevard, Pasadena, CA 91106 or you can e-mail your story and photos to Mikki Bolliger at MRBolliger@pasadena.edu. We are waiting to hear from you. We'll be checking the mailbox every day.

Scholarship Fund Needs Donations

Times are tough, especially for students who are trying to make ends meet in these tough economic times. Each year the Retirees' Association prides itself in being able to support outstanding students who need help to continue their education. However, without your help, we won't be able to give as many scholarships. Remember, you can earn air miles by putting your donation on your credit card. Just call the foundation office at PCC and tell them it is for the retirees' scholarship.

In Memoriam

Woody Olsen, Former Chairman of the English Department, Died at 99

Comments by Alan Lamson

Woody Olsen, former Chair of the English Department, died at the age of 99 on June 14 of this year. Woody and his wife Marie came to California from Michigan in 1945 after Woody received a Master's degree in English at the University of Michigan.

After getting a junior college credential at UCLA, he was hired by Dorothy Dixon to teach English at PCC in 1946. Then in 1956, she recommended that Woody be appointed chair of the department. Woody held that position until his retirement in 1977. During that time he wielded considerable influence at the college, helping to select Armen Sarafian as president in 1965. He was a strong supporter of his faculty and resisted attempts by the administration to make him more supportive of management.

After he and Marie retired, they moved to Santa Barbara where Woody soon began teaching in the Adult Education program at Santa Barbara City College. He continued to teach in the program even after he and Marie moved to a retirement center.

He was 97 when he taught his last class. In 2005, he won a statewide award for his teaching.

I first met Woody Ohlsen in 1969 when he had just returned from a sabbatical leave in England where he was doing research for his book on the Bible, *Perspectives on Old Testament Literature*. I was 26 and had been hired the previous year by Frank Hammond along with several others. Frank served as interim department chair while Woody was on sabbatical.

I'm not sure when I first met Woody, but I do remember our first conference. In those days the chair sat in on classes of all the new teachers. I remember being nervous when I walked into Woody's office for his review of my class. He put me at ease by asking that I call him Woody. I'm sure he made some suggestions for improvement in my teaching and he commented that I dismissed the class five minutes early. But what I particularly remember is his advice about student papers: "Say, listen," he said, "don't get hung up on grading student papers." What a relief. He must have known that I was up late every night poring over the papers that constantly flowed from my four composition classes.

By the time that Woody retired in 1977, my wife Sheila and I had become close friends with him and Marie, especially after they moved to Santa Barbara. Several times a year I would call and ask: "Is our room available?" It usually was, and we would stay overnight at their house.

Woody was a serious person. He ran the English department with a strict hand, often putting notes in teacher's boxes to see him about some problem.

And he loved serious works of literature, like the Greek tragedies, the "Iliad," and "Moby Dick," which he considered the greatest American novel. He taught these and other classic works in a course he created at PCC called *Masterpieces of Literature*. He also taught them in his adult education courses in Santa Barbara.

He continued to teach these courses, even after he and Marie moved to the Vista de Monte retirement center when she began to show signs of dementia.

But Woody had a lighter side as well. He loved to chat up waitresses, which he did whenever we would go out to eat.

He would never forget their names, particularly the attractive ones, and he usually suggested that we go back to the restaurant where his favorite waitress worked. Sometimes a waitress would give him a hug and he was ecstatic. He often enjoyed

recalling it. Perhaps she fancied him? No wonder his favorite joke was that his favorite sex was oral: he loved to talk about it.

As much as Woody loved flirting with the ladies, his true love was Marie. He would often comment that she was the most beautiful woman he had ever met—and also one of the best kissers. After she passed away several years ago, Woody would say he often saw her in his dreams and spoke with her.

He didn't really believe in an afterlife, but he held out the possibility that he might see Marie again.

Woody stopped teaching when he was 97. He said that he had trouble speaking and hearing the responses from his students. He was also concerned that his memory wasn't what it used to be. Teaching was what kept Woody alive. When he stopped, I thought it wouldn't be long before he joined Marie.

Woody will be fondly remembered by those of us fortunate enough to have taught when he was at PCC; he was one of great ones from an era long since gone.

Helen Oakley

Right before the newsletter went to the printer, we received word that Helen Oakley passed away. Helen was a Service Clerk in Facilities. She worked at PCC for 21 years. She retired in 1990.

Chuck Havard, Former Counselor in Disabled Students' Programs and Services, Passed Away

By Kent Yamauchi

Chuck Havard, a counselor and disability specialist in our Disabled Student Programs and Services, passed away on Dec. 8. He retired from Pasadena City College in 2005 after serving our students and the college for more than 30 years.

If you were at PCC during any of the years that Chuck was, I am sure you either knew him or knew of him. A compassionate and caring person, he was always supportive of his students who routinely referred to him as "my" counselor.

He never allowed his situation (being a quadriplegic since a gymnastics accident in his early 20s) to define him. Rather, he created a life where he sought to make the most of every moment, whether serving students at work, being a loving and devoted husband, father, and grandfather, or quietly crusading for the preservation of our fragile environment.

Chuck suffered through two serious medical conditions (heart and cancer) since his retirement, yet true to his form, bounced back with vigor and determination. But, such physical assaults weakened his abilities, but not his resolve, to enjoy life.

After a brief illness, and with little suffering, he passed away at home surrounded by his wife, Dorothy, his two daughters, Christine and Joanna, and his grandchildren. We miss Chuck dearly.

Phyllis Brzozowski Spent 23 Years at PCC

Phyllis Clare Miller Brzozowski passed away May 7, 2014, at Emeritus in Rancho Mirage, CA. Phyllis was born in Findlay, Ohio, September 30, 1924. Phyllis married Stanley Brzozowski who preceded her in death in 1972.

Education was primary in her life. She earned her Ed.D. in Higher Education from Nova Southeastern University in Florida. She taught in the School of Business and Economics at Cal State Los Angeles before coming to Pasadena City College. She taught business and marketing- merchandising courses for 23 years at PCC. Prior to her teaching career, she worked in retail management.

An avid traveler, Phyllis spent several summers with Global Volunteers, teaching English in Poland, Russia, China, and Ghana. While residing in Ventura after her retirement, she devoted much of her time and energy to The Friends of the Ventura Library and was a member of the Unitarian Church in Ventura.

She is survived by her brother, Richard Miller, along with many nieces and nephews. Phyllis was dearly loved by her friends and family.

Consider Honoring a Friend or Colleague

When members of the college staff pass away, friends and relatives often wonder how best to honor those individuals.

Many times, special scholarships are established in the name of the deceased. The college foundation can help set up a scholarship in the name of someone you want to remember.

If you don't want an award named after the person, you can also donate money to an existing scholarship in that individual's name.

If the deceased retired from PCC, you could also contribute to the Retirees Association scholarship in that person's name.

If you have any questions or you want to name a scholarship or donate money in someone's name, contact the PCC Foundation at (626) 585-7065.