



Rising, Falling into 36th Year

Birthday Balloons



Info Offered



Balloons ready to fly marked campus observance of Grossmont's 35th anniversary. Variety of information included library search methods, offered by Maria Zarcone and Barb Guiette. Ginger Azhocar was a determined participant in the contest for launching watermelon seeds. Taking a tumble at the end of a tug-of-war was one of the vanquished, G.C. President Richard Sanchez.

Seed Launcher



Who's Falling?



Editor's Comments

by Pat Higgins

You'll notice in the Letters on this page that Lee Roper's suggestion of more retiree gatherings has brought a positive response, and that September 2 is the date suggested for the first of the informal meetings.

It will be nice if the gathering is large and takes up all available room at McDonald's. Management will be surprised, perhaps nonplussed, to find so many morning patrons, but I'm sure the extra money going into the register will make up for whatever momentary distress occurs.

Conversational topics will be whatever they are wherever you sit down, and they'll end when we decide to leave. Spouses are welcome, so come in pairs if you want . . .

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Another subject. I think in an issue of the Grapevine soon after I became editor, I mentioned the quality of assistance I get in putting out the publication. The assistance was, and is first class, and I think it's time I speak again of the assistants.

Sirkka Huovila, whose regular campus work is in Word Processing, puts the Grapevine together, fitting stories and pictures into the space we have, generally where I suggest, but elsewhere if space dictates. Sometimes I marvel at her ability to get in all the material we have, and occasionally to find filler to cover extra space we have. If the Grapevine looks good—and I think it does—much of the credit goes to Sirkka, and I'm glad we have her.

John Dixon is campus photographer, and my requests for photos always get quick actions, whether they're of people in his files or whether they need to be taken by appointment. Sometimes John is asked for a picture illustrative of a campus feature at Grossmont or Cuyamaca, using his own judgment in selection. Two which come to mind are the new transportation facility at Grossmont, and the Highway 125 construction just east of Grossmont.

(see EDITOR p. 3)



Letters

The following letter was prompted by Lee Roper's poem in the April Grapevine.—Ed.

Grossmont Emeritus Rules Bizarre?

"Emeritus" was originally a status accorded to Roman soldiers who had served their term. At the beginning of the 20th Century, on the four-year college and university levels generally, the status was awarded, without application, to professors who had vacated their position because of long service, age or infirmity. Today, on the same level, it generally refers to tenured professors who retire because of long service, and is a status given without application, but automatically. Where the status is not given wholesale, an institution may select a retiree now and then of particularly distinguished background and make a to-do about the award; there is never an application process. I could find no study of "emeritus" on the community-college level, but, undoubtedly, Grossmont's demand for application is at the least unusual, is probably unique, and certainly bizarre. If Grossmont has actually turned the term on its ear, it should demand historic recognition. If it would, I have no doubt the shades of Roman soldiers would shake with laughter, as some of us living Grossmont retirees have been doing.

- Ray Reynolds

Getting Together

There was positive response to the suggestion that we provide the opportunity for retirees to get together more often. So, let's meet about 9 a.m. the first Tuesday of the month beginning Sept. 2nd at the McDonald's near the college (corner of Navajo and Lake Murray).

Time, place, etc., are all arbitrary and easily changed. It is open to all faculty, including Fred Tidwell and Ralph Hampton wherever you are. You will have to buy your own 27-cent cup of coffee, but you won't have to be there at sunup or listen to administrators spread bovine chips. Only one suggestion, don't wear your "old fart" hat, this is a class joint.

- Lee Roper

(see LETTERS p. 5)

Biblio-Files

by Tom Scanlan



It seems that one or the other of my two daughters is always giving me books for Christmas or my birthday which turn out to be among my favorites. Both Karen and Alison have a deep appreciation of the natural world, and the books they give me often reflect this.

Anyway, just a few weeks ago Rosemarie and I made a car trip to Seattle, partly to celebrate my own birthday and also (a few weeks belatedly) the birthdays of my oldest daughter, Karen and her husband, Mark. And to celebrate that Mark had just received his Ph.D. from Berkeley. It was a longer car trip than we normally care to make and we saw lots of rain and logging trucks, but there were many rewards, too, like seeing the spectacular snow capped peaks of Mt. Shasta in northern California, and those of Mt. Hood and Mt. Adams along the Columbia River gorge, and even Mt. Rainier and the Cascade and Olympic ranges which are visible from Seattle. On our return trip, we marveled at the redwoods while driving from Grants Pass, Oregon down through Crescent City, California and on to Eureka and Ukiah. What a beautiful country this is.

(see BIBLIO-FILES p. 5)

The Grapevine is a free newsletter for retirees of Cuyamaca and Grossmont Colleges, published three times yearly.

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Ruth Coover Dead Had Suffered Stroke



Professor Emerita Ruth Coover, 82, long-time foreign language teacher at Grossmont College, died June 29 in Grossmont Hospital. She had entered the

hospital May 21 after suffering a severe stroke, and for a time appeared to be improving, but her condition worsened and she died.

Ruth was a native of Germany and came to the U.S. in 1950. She had earned an undergraduate degree at the University of Cologne, in Germany, and after coming to America, she got a master's degree at the University of Nebraska. She taught German, French and Latin in Nebraska before coming west. She settled in the San Diego area, and taught in the Grossmont High School District before becoming one of the first Grossmont College faculty members in 1961.

At Grossmont College she taught German and French until she retired in 1984.

Marie James, a department colleague and close friend of Ruth, recalled their relationship. "She was my mentor at Grossmont, and really like a sister," Marie said. "She was my first friend in San Diego, and I knew her for 32 years while we taught together in the German Department."

Don and Joan Scouler, now retired in Tucson, were friends and sometimes travel companions of Ruth. Don recalled how he became acquainted with her.

"I have been Ruth's friend for 32 years. This lady became known to me in a special way, when I went to a special event the college had sometimes, known as an encounter group weekend. It was at the height of the touchy-feely era that heralded the beginning of a brave new world of openness, love, beauty and truth forever.

"Well, maybe. But Ruth and I were there, willing to learn about something bright, new and beautiful, and to shed the constraints and shackles of rigid, authoritarian thinking. By the end of the four marathon, I was totally exhausted by the mindless exhortations to be free, to

Verdict Is Split on Doctors' Value

Reaction remained divided on the merit of the GCCCD hiring the Accounting Doctors, after the Ventura firm presented its findings to the Board May 6 in its check of a previous audit of the district by Vavrinek, Trine, Day & Co.

The Accounting Doctors found formula, and cross-footnote errors, along with transposed numbers on seven pages of the 58-page audit.

As had been predicted before the Doctors' examination, no major errors in the audit were found, and that prompted Trustee Rick Alexander to say, "the whole process has been a waste of time and money." Alexander, along with Trustee Ron Kraft, had voted earlier against hiring the Accounting Doctors to do the review, at a cost of \$3,750.

In public testimony, D.T. Radmilovich said, "It's still incredible to me and baffling, to have a board of this stature take all this time to find a couple of grammatical errors." Speaking in support of the hiring decision were Waldo and Beverly Clark, parents of Board President Rebecca Clark.

Trustee Carolyn Griffin, who started the whole episode by contacting the Accounting Doctors, then presenting a proposal to the Board March 4, said she was pleased with the May 6 presentation, and that she had wanted to check the District's financial picture on her own.

In a development subsequent to, but not directly attributable to the Accounting Doctors episode, the Board voted to hire KPMG Peat Marwick for the 1996-97 audits. Trustees Alexander and Dr. Timothy Caruthers, along with Jim Austin, Vice Chancellor, Business, explored the District situation, then recommended that the Board hire KPMG Peat Marwick. Citing such advantages as proximity to KPMG offices, along with consulting and advising services, the three found that firm the best to hire. Maximum total cost for three years will be \$93,000.

Replacement of one vendor by another is not an every year action by the District, but it is not unusual, and the substitution of KPMG Peat Marwick for Vavrinek, Trine, Day & Co. might have occurred even if there had been no Accounting Doctors matter.

tune in and drop out of mindless middle class thinking.

"Well, some of us were too mired in our ways to buy into all of this. But during the long hours I got to know Ruth, and found a kindred spirit. She was always willing to look at new ideas, to weigh and analyze them and finally to accept or reject them on her own terms. We hit it off then, as friends, and remained so to this day. I will miss her in a special way, and be grateful for three decades of true friendship."

Joan Scouler remembered good travel times with Ruth. "Ruth and I shared many travels, some with Don along and some without. I remember particularly celebrating her 70th birthday with her in a little town near Milford Sound, New Zealand. I served her morning coffee and sang "Happy Birthday" to her. We were in adjoining rooms but I had a kitchenette. I'll never forget the happy, surprised look on her

face when she answered my knock. We were both still in night clothes.

"Another happy memory of travels with Ruth was when she and I attended an Elderhostel in Oaxaca. Her Spanish, which she didn't claim as one of her four languages, was fluent. We amused ourselves by visiting every farmacia in Oaxaca, I think, trying to buy pharmaceuticals not available at home, with no success, I might add. She was a dear and special friend. I shall miss her."

Ruth is survived by her daughter, Vonnie Coover-Stone, who said a gathering of her mother's friends is being planned for the end of July, probably during the weekend of July 26-27. Information may be obtained by phoning (619) 463-7228.

Also, A Ruth Coover scholarship is being established at Grossmont. Contributions may be sent to the Scholarship Secretary, Financial Aid, Grossmont College.



District Softball Probe Continues

A district investigation into alleged misconduct by members and coaches of the Grossmont women's softball team may be completed next month. The reported actions prompted GC President Richard Sanchez to forfeit the team's final nine games. Sanchez could not comment on the specifics of the case because of the ongoing investigation, but said he'd have a more complete explanation when the investigation is finished.

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LETTERS (cont. from p. 2)

Agreement

I agree with Lee Roper that unsponsored luncheons during the year are a great idea.

- Marie James

Island Dwelling Fine If No Snow

Guess what: the retirement crew has yet another Nor'wester who weathered the Great Christmas storm. Jan and I were in San Diego on that crisp, dry Christmas day you people enjoyed in 1996, and we drove back up to Washington just in time to hit our home island in the San Juan Archipelago one day after the storm dumped two feet of snow in our driveway. We live on Orcas Island, the third ferry stop out in Washington Sound from Anacortes, WA; our trusty Saturn burrowed its way through 15 miles of unplowed road only to spin out at the bottom of our hill (with assorted Subarus, Hondas and Toyotas).

People tell tales about what Washingtonians do in their native habitat; but the truth is a little less spectacular. The snow shut everything down here; they didn't even plow I-5 in Seattle. The city of Bellingham (on the Canadian border) had NO snowplows. When it really rains, Washingtonians drive worse than Californians on the first rainy day in November. And . . . no one carries umbrellas up here (it never rains down, they say); they are as uncool

to carry as a cup of weak coffee. You are required to drink Arabica-beaned black stuff made by Starbucks, S.B.C., or Millstone; there are Latte and Espresso stands at every other highway corner.

We enjoyed Tom Scanlan's review of *Snow Falling on Cedars*. As you can imagine, the book is a big favorite up here. The map in the front of the book includes all the real islands in the San Juans and adds a mythical island just south of Lopez called San Piedro. The action takes place in Amity Harbor, which is the thinly-disguised county seat, Friday Harbor. A trial very much like that described in the book actually took place in Anacortes, which is the closest city on the mainland. The Japanese grew strawberries, pears and apples on the mainland and in the islands before the relocation madness of World War II. Commercial agriculture is now almost non-existent in the islands. Most people of Japanese ancestry here now are retired Californians like half of the people who live on Orcas Island.

Why are we here? I suppose the first thing we would have to mention is the unparalleled beauty of the place. We get just enough rain to keep things green: it's strange when your holiday cuttings survive for three months. Rainfall in the islands is about half that of Seattle, a phenomenon caused by the "maritime rain shadow." It is never very warm: spring heatwaves are calculated in the 60s; and the 80s are rare even in July and August. Boating is almost a year-around sport; but you'd need to layer up in December and January. Snowstorms like the December one are rare, but "old timers" talk about the winter of 1991 when old trees went down in 100 mph winds out of Canada. Of course we have our BC up here like we used to have a BC down there; but when the Canadians cross the border, they drive fast new cars and don't light as many fires.

Lee Roper's poem reminds me of one he wrote about me, something about gravy stains on my tie. But I don't remember wearing ties very often at Grossmont. And even though memories fade fast as one hits the big Medicare age group, I can never forget that what made Grossmont College the great place I am sure that Lee is trying to describe

was the people who taught there. Only one has visited us so far: Don Shannon, my old friend who retired himself this year. If any of you come by on I-5, at least call us or wave at the ferry.

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BIBLIO-FILES (cont. from p. 2)



So I've just finished reading one of Karen's latest finds, an extraordinary book of short stories, *Ship Fever*, by Andrea Barrett (1996, Norton paperback). They are fictional stories but are based on real people and real history, mostly nineteenth century naturalists (we'd probably call them biologists or doctors today). You need no background in science or its history to appreciate these stories about the struggles and passions of dedicated humans involved in their search for knowledge about the natural world and themselves. Andrea has brought these people to life and has made real to the reader their successes—and their failures. The title story, actually a novella, is wisely saved for the end, like a fine dessert. It's an absolute gem of a story—although a real heart-breaker—about a Canadian doctor and the two women he loves, each desperately trying in their own way to help the overwhelming tide of immigrants from the great Irish potato famine of the mid-nineteenth century. Talk about bringing history to life—WOW!!

In my first *Biblio-files* column (November, 1994) I stated that Wallace Stegner was one of my favorite authors and I briefly described some of his more popular novels, such as *Angle of Repose* and my own favorite, *Crossing to Safety*. Just a few months ago, Viking Press published an excellent biography, *Wallace Stegner, His Life and Work*, by Jackson Benson, a professor of American Literature at San Diego State University.

BIBLIO-FILES (cont. next page)

BIBLIO-FILES (cont. from p. 5)

Benson began working with Stegner back in 1986. Stegner was reluctant about having his biography done but had warmly reviewed Benson's award winning biography of John Steinbeck for the Los Angeles Times, and so he gave Benson the go-ahead, with unlimited access to his own papers. They met each year to work on the project until Stegner's death in 1993. It is a beautifully written biography, very thorough but written in a conversational style with numerous anecdotes and conversations. Benson illustrates so clearly the powerful influence of the environment on Wallace Stegner's life and on the stories he wrote, as well as Stegner's significant achievements in influencing environmental issues

If you haven't read a Stegner novel yet, you might want to start with his first novel, Remembering Laughter, published in 1937. It won him Little Brown's Novelette prize of \$2500, a magnificent sum in those days for a struggling English instructor whose wife, Mary, was only days away from delivering their first child, Page. Out of print for many decades, the novella was recently re-released last year in paperback by Penguin Books. The story relates how the loneliness and beauty of a remote Iowa farm affect a young woman who has just come there to live with her older married

sister. She becomes attracted to her sister's husband, who drinks too much, but treats her very kindly, and the story grows out of these circumstances.

Sometimes a good film or BBC production will revive my interest in an older classic which I'd read (often only partially) under duress as an assignment in a high school or college English course. A recent example was the BBC production of Daphne DuMaurier's Rebecca, the quintessential Gothic Mystery Romance novel which was published in 1938. On my first attempt to read it (nearly 50 years ago), I had considered it to be a 'girl's book' and turned instead to Jack London or Zane Grey (or worse, Mickey Spillane). I was so taken with the BBC production, however, especially the coastal English countryside setting for Manderley and the *marvelous* portrayal of the sinister Mrs. Danvers by Diana Rigg, that I checked out a copy of Rebecca from the library. I enjoyed reading the novel as much as any that I've read recently. DuMaurier is a far better writer than I had remembered and the story and characters very much came to life for me. Mystery and romance fans will probably already have read this novel, but this is a modern classic that no reader should skip.

Another example of the film version of a novel being good enough to encourage viewers to read (or re-read) the book is The Milagro Beanfield War.

I had read the book before seeing the film and thoroughly enjoyed the story, which was based on an actual confrontation between long time Hispanic ranchers in northern New Mexico and a vacation-site developer who is threatening their water supply. However, the characters are what *really* make this a delightful book to read. They are sometimes funny, sometimes serious, sometimes romantic, sometimes sad—and sometimes they dredge deeply from their human spirit and perform miracles. When I heard that Robert Redford was trying to create a close version of the book at his SunDance Studio by doing much of the filming in a small New Mexico town not far from where the event which inspired the story occurred, I was one of the first in line to see the film when it premiered at a Mission Valley theater. The film was outstanding, but as often happens with non-Hollywood films, it never made the rounds of our local theaters. The Milagro Beanfield War, published in 1974, was the first novel of John Nichol's 'New Mexico trilogy', the second and third novels being The Magic Journey and The Nirvana Blues. Although the latter two novels had their moments, I didn't enjoy either of them nearly as much as 'Milagro.' If you missed the film, read the book. It might just inspire you to search for the video. Both will leave your own spirit a little bit lighter and happier.

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