

“Operation Homecoming - The Return of the Vietnam War POWs”

Jim Maddux
April 12 Speaker



Over 40 years ago U Club Member Jim Maddux was a U.S. Air Force intelligence officer. He was then part of Operation Homecoming, an effort to secure the release and return to American society of 591 POWs who had been captured in Vietnam.

Jim Maddux was a bit apprehensive when he first met the prisoner of war he was charged with debriefing. “We didn’t know what kind of shape they would be in,” says Maddux, a captain at the time. “We planned for the worst and hoped for the best.”

It was a complicated military and humanitarian effort involving physical, psychological and spiritual well-being as well as gathering intelligence that the POWs could uniquely provide. No doubt it was a life-changing experience for Jim. He’ll tell us all about it on April 12.

Reservations are due by Monday, April 9 and may be made at [April Speaker Lunch](#) or by calling Lori at the Club, 541-779-4707.

The Board has accepted with regret the resignations of Harry and David, Scott Weaver, Monte Mendenhall and Russ McKinley

**Cinco de Mayo
Celebration**

**Friday
May 4**

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member

SPOTLIGHT

Gene Abell

Gene Abell grew up in Rapid City, South Dakota, attending schools in Rapid City and spending his summers helping tend his uncle's ranch. One of Gene's jobs was maintaining 67 miles of ranch fencing. Sixty-seven miles of fence on one ranch? Really? Yes, really, Gene says. "That is the way ranches are in the Black Hills area of South Dakota."

When ten Gene read *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and decided to build a raft of his own — in his case from a 4 by 8 sheet of plywood and some truck inner tubes. One morning he launched the raft into Rapid Creek, which flows into the Cheyenne River, which flows into the Missouri. Provisioned with a sack lunch, he made it as far as dusk and the confluence of the Cheyenne River when his parents spotted him.



Young Gene

In high school he located a salvaged car with four wheels and a steering wheel but no brakes, no motor, and no seats. Older friends towed the car to a flat spot on the top of a long, straight 2-mile decline. Sitting there on a wooden crate Gene steered the brakeless car as it sped down the road. After about five runs with friends, Gene's parents realized what he was doing and confiscated the car. While there were cross streets (without traffic) nobody got hurt but that wasn't true for a home-made bobsled which disintegrated as it went downhill producing broken arms, wrists, and one broken leg.

Gene played wide receiver on the high school football team, and again at North Dakota State University, a Division One college. He also survived and stayed there studying architecture which he said was demanding. "All we did was drink and go to class."

Arriving in Medford as an intern at Afseth, Jacobs and Schmitz, Gene was licensed as an architect in 1982 — at the time Oregon's youngest licensed architect. His current projects include the new Roosevelt and Jackson Schools and the Jackson County Airport Terminal. When he's not working or at the University Club Gene and his wife Sandra ride around the western United States on their BMW touring motorcycles. He estimates that Sandra has logged 150,000 miles of seat time on the back of a motorcycle.



Really? 150,000 miles. "Yes, really," Gene says. "We have been riding bikes our whole married lives."

For his whole life Gene has liked the adrenalin rush he gets from going fast.

Apparently so.



In Memoriam — We are saddened to report the passing of former Club president and longtime Member, Will Chinn

Leave your
Mark



Previous Club Members have included the Club in their estate plans and their generosity has helped create the experience you've enjoyed here.

Please consider leaving your mark on the Club's future by requesting a bequest invitation from [Jerry Jacobson](#) at 542-773-2727.

April Lunch & Learn

The Power of Mentorship

With Damien Rennie



This month's *Lunch and Learn* features Damien Rennie and a conversation on "The Power of Mentorship" both in -- and out -- of the workplace. Damien is a Financial Advisor at SkyOaks Financial, the owner of the Southern Oregon Poker Club and the philanthropic organization "Gamble for Good." He has firsthand experience mentoring others as well as realizing personal growth from the mentorship of others. He'll discuss the three key steps in mentoring and will share some powerful stories along the way. If we're lucky, we may also hear about his journey as a southern Oregon native to Las Vegas, ESPN and making a net profit of over \$100,000 along the way.

Reservations are due by Monday, April 9 and may be made online at [April Lunch and Learn](#) or by calling Lori at the Club at 541-772-4707.

ANNUAL MEETING



Reno and Rick Holcom to the board. In a surprise (to them!) Jerry Lambo presented certificates to the past four years' recipients (Gene Abell, Peter Sage, Doug Smith and Jack Day) of the Bull Throwing Award! The Members also expressed their appreciation to retiring board Member Russ Milburn.

The Club's 107th Annual Meeting on March 29 drew a capacity crowd and a great meal, followed by a great meeting, filled the evening. The Members re--elected Jack Day, Ron Naumann, Peter Sage and Greg Koenig and newly elected Jason



The surprised award recipients



March 8 - Donnie Maclurcan
“*Imagining an Alternative
Economic Future*”

University Club Members went back to college on March 8 when they heard a fast paced and learned lecture on economics, the true nature of money, business organization, the flaw in capitalism, and the impending financial crisis.

The speaker was Donnie Maclurcan, a Distinguished Fellow at the Schumacher Institute and an Affiliate Professor at SOU in Ashland. He spoke of the ephemeral nature of money being created out of thin air by a loan. The problem, he said, was that it was the essential nature of capitalism to seek *more, endlessly more*, and that the world was approaching—in the next three years—a financial crisis far greater than the 2008 crisis and its aftermath. The debt has become un-sustainable, he said.

He said that the 2008 collapse was manageable, barely, because the government had the financial capacity to do what needed to be done—declare them solvent and loan them money. Financial institutions were in fact too big to fail, so as a policy matter, they had to be saved, thus saving the economy to pull itself out of the hole over the next five years.

Next time the collapse will be too profound to stop.

Happily, there is a remedy short of economic collapse, if we move quickly. He said that government owned enterprises were one solution, but not his favorite. His favorite was for corporations to become not-for-profit. We don't need stockholders any more, he said. Corporations already have capital. We need managers and workers who work for community values and community members rather than profits. Corporations, he said, should use profits to buy up their own shares to put themselves out of business as profit-seekers, becoming instead mutually owned. Credit unions are a better business model for financial institutions than are publicly traded banks.

This is not extreme thinking, he said. Some of the most important institutions in any capitalist society are organized as non-profits: Universities and hospitals are nonprofit enterprises. They have managers, workers, they own facilities, they do the serious work of the world—all without stockholders.

Your University Club is ahead of the game. *We ourselves* are owned jointly by our members, and we manage ourselves, operating on behalf of the membership, and we have thrived for over a century.



Make your reservation now for Cinco de Mayo, May 4, at [Cinco de Mayo](#).

From the Scholarship Foundation



Now approaching its 10th anniversary, the Rogue River Valley University Club Scholarship Foundation has awarded more than \$40,000 to over 50 local high school and college students — and it all began over a 2008 dinner at Bill Williams' house with the Bagleys, Williams, Stallcups and Huyckes deciding that the U Club should do something to help finance college costs for local students.

The foundation's grants have been financed exclusively by University Club Members either with contributions or participation in the auction held at the Club's Summer Party.

Letters from recent recipients include:

I would like to thank you for this generous gift. This scholarship is very precious to me and I am ever so grateful .

Being the first in my family to attend college is making me and my family very excited and I could never have done it without your generous donation.

I would not be here without scholarships and grants and being the first in my family to graduate high school and then go directly to college is a privilege I may not have had . Thanks so much for being a part of that.

One thing which has stood out for me is my engineering class. We've had two projects so far, the reverse being to take apart a toy and make a manual for it. This scholarship is helping me achieve my career goals and I'd like you to know that.

Thank you for funding this scholarship. It has made all the difference in my academic journey as I pursue a career as a psychiatric nurse. [sophomore, second year recipient].

The Foundation will shortly be sending you an email inviting your contribution towards this year's scholarship round along with an invitation to the Foundation's Annual Scholarship Awards Luncheon to be held on Thursday, June 14.

Welcome Back to the U Club - returning Member Bob Dickey!

