

OSURA News & Views

Spring 2019

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OSURA Member Profile: Steve and Dyna Besse

Contributed by Bill Young

Visiting with these two nonagenarians was a special privilege. Steve, born in 1919, is approaching his 100th birthday, and Dyna, born in 1923, is just four years behind him. They married in June of 1945, almost 74 years ago. But let's not get ahead of ourselves in telling their story.



Steve and Dyna Besse standing outside their Stoneybrook Lodge apartment, which they have accented with winter holiday memorabilia.

This couple is about as local as they get, both raised in the Mid-Willamette Valley and both OSU alums. And, of course, both long time OSURA members.

Steve came to Corvallis as a 2 year old child with his parents when his father, Ralph Besse, joined the Oregon Agricultural College (OAC) as an Experiment Station administrator. All 12 years of Steve's schooling was received in Corvallis, graduating from Corvallis High School in 1937.

Dyna (not her given name) Mornhinweg was born and raised in Albany and graduated in 1941 from Albany Union High School. The summer after high school, she worked at Crater Lake National Park, which is where she acquired the life-long moniker, Dyna. That in itself is a good story, but it's not for public consumption.

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**Oregon State
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OSURA Member Profile: Steve and Dyna Besse

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Steve was only 17 when he enrolled at OAC in the fall of 1937 to study engineering, but he still had good friends in high school that kept him from focusing on his college classes. Thus, he dropped out to work for a year for the University of California as a milk tester. When he re-enrolled in the fall of 1939, he decided to major in farm crops, and after five years graduated in 1943.

Dyna enrolled at OAC in the fall of 1941 and studied child development in the College of Home Economics. A more disciplined student, she graduated in 1945. Nevertheless, she did make time to socialize after meeting Steve (then a senior) during her sophomore year.

As the United States was pulled into World War II after Pearl Harbor, Steve joined the Navy in January 1942 through their V-7 program. This was a voluntary training program for officer candidates with the goal to rapidly train young officers to meet the demands of our vastly expanding naval fleet.



As the Executive Officer aboard LCI 420, Steve Besse transported soldiers to Omaha Beach on June 6, 1944 in the first wave of the Allied invasion of mainland Europe.

After graduation from Midshipmen's School, Steve trained on landing craft along the east coast for the impending invasion of mainland Europe. On February 1, 1944,

as the Executive Officer on a LCI (Landing Craft Infantry), he crossed the Atlantic in a convoy of 100 ships arriving 23 days later in Falmouth, England. Further training for all the amphibious vessels continued on the British coast until the Normandy Invasion.

Now, almost 75 years since, Steve's memory of D-Day is still razor sharp.

On June 6, 1944, five LCIs (including Steve's LCI 420) were among the first wave to hit Omaha Beach under horrendous fire. LCI 420 was the only ship to get off the beach after unloading their troops. The other ships were hit by German 88s (88mm artillery guns) and land mines. LCI 420 then sailed out 10 miles to waiting transport ships where they took another 200 soldiers aboard and headed back to Omaha Beach. Three more successful beachings were made that day. That night LCI 420, together with another LCI, was ordered to tie up to a barge holding 1,000 tons of open ammunition on deck and beach the barge on Omaha Beach under tremendous bombardment.

Over the next two days LCI 420 made several more trips to the beach carrying 200 troops each time. Then it was sent back to England to pick up a load of nurses and bring them to Omaha Beach to help care for the wounded.

Those memories will never fade, but a grateful world hasn't forgotten either. In February 2015, the government of France recognized Steve with the presentation of the Legion of Honor, their highest military decoration, for his service during WWII. Now residing at the Stoneybrook Lodge for the

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last three years, Steve has contributed to their veterans honor wall and Veterans Day displays each November.

Following the invasion, Steve returned to New York in December 1944, and then was stationed in San Francisco on the Western Sea Frontier before being discharged in March of 1946. However, back on the west coast, he was able to continue the relationship that had started back at OAC with Dyna. Thus, with a weekend pass, he was able to get a flight to Albany and marry Dyna on June 24, 1945 in the Methodist church and honeymooned back on the train.

As a civilian living in Sunnyvale, CA, Steve started a career with Ferry Morse Seed Company, and he and Dyna started their family of three daughters. The girls were born between 1947 and 1954. Steve stayed with the company for 17 years, but in 1963 he joined OSU as a County Extension agent in Malheur County and moved his family to Ontario, Oregon. Dyna was active in 4-H leadership in the county, especially judging showmanship, and continued supporting the activities of their three daughters.

In 1970, the family moved to Eugene where Steve was staff chair of Lane County Extension. Dyna joined the staff at Lane Community College and taught home economic classes on food preparation and nutrition for 10 years. Steve's Extension career took him to Corvallis in 1980 where he served as a Regional Administrator for

13 western Oregon counties. Prior to his retirement in 1985, he also served as the Associate Director of International Agriculture.

This couple has been no less active in the 30+ years since retiring. Steve and Dyna worked on two short-term assignments in Poland for ACDI/VOCA (Agricultural Cooperative Development International/ Volunteers in Overseas Cooperative Assistance) and another assignment in Belarus in the late 80s and early 90s. Dyna and Steve have also led tours for Rural Route Tours, a travel agency focused on agricultural itineraries, to Europe, New Zealand, and Australia. In addition, they have twice led groups to Kenya to view that country's wildlife.

Today, they reside comfortably in their Stoneybrook Lodge apartment, where they enjoy frequent visits from their daughters, and their families.

Volunteer Spotlight: Retirees and the Peace Corps



Most people don't realize it, but there is no age limit for joining the Peace Corps, says Scot Roskelley, a Peace Corps recruiter who makes frequent visits to the OSU campus. "The oldest person to ever serve in the Peace Corps since it was established in 1961 lives right here in Corvallis," says Roskelley. "Her name is Alice Carter. She entered when she was 86 and came out when she was 88."

Aside from right upon graduation from college, retirement is the next easiest time in most people's lives for making the plunge and serving overseas, he says. Between college and retirement, people have work, family responsibilities, etc. But upon retirement, they typically have the freedom to make a major life change like serving in the Peace Corps, he explains. "It's common people will come to me and say I always wanted to serve, but didn't get to when I was younger, and that desire never went away."

There are two different volunteer programs in the Peace Corps. There's the "standard" Peace Corps program where volunteer opportunities are in the areas of agriculture, environmental science, teaching, public

health, community/youth development and business advising. These assignments are 27 months in length. And then, there is another program called "Peace Corps Response." These are volunteer assignments that are six months to a year in length, and are in a wide variety of areas – not just the six categories of the standard Peace Corps program.

Older volunteers aren't typically placed in physically rigorous assignments. They also must pass a comprehensive medical screening for eligibility to serve.

Peace Corps volunteers are currently serving in more than 60 different countries. Complete job descriptions for each opening are posted on the Peace Corps' website. People may apply for a specific opening, or can apply to go anywhere and have Peace Corps place them where the need is greatest. Individuals typically apply about a year before they're sent abroad.

www.peacecorps.gov

Roskelley invites anyone interested in finding out more about the Peace Corps to contact him at sroskelley@peacecorps.gov.

President's Message

By Chris Mathews, OSURA President

On March 12 an annual OSURA ritual was held—the luncheon of past and present OSURA presidents. Immediate past president Tom Plant made arrangements, and fifteen of the nineteen past and soon-to-be past presidents met at Izzy's. The first item after the meal was a brief remembrance of past president Kathy Heath, who had died just a few days previously. Kathy is the first past president we have lost, and she will be missed—particularly her efforts in organizing the Gymnastics and Women's Basketball dinners. We have Kathy to thank for Coach Scott Rueck's appearance at the basketball event year after year.

Next, Tom led a discussion of OSURA's most significant challenges, including membership, recruiting leadership talent, securing parity in

university “perks” for staff as well as faculty, and maintaining a higher profile on campus. The past presidents were fully engaged, and some great ideas were heard. In my remarks, I expressed appreciation to the founders of OSURA for their success in securing stable university funding in partial support of our organization. I also urged the past presidents to continue their active involvement, particularly in helping to recognize and recruit leadership talent for board and officer positions and also to promote OSURA membership among their retired friends and colleagues.

We are already looking forward to next year's gathering of past and present OSURA presidents.



Chris Mathews, current OSURA President, at Izzy's Restaurant where the March 12 luncheon was held for past presidents of OSURA.



Attendees at the 7th Annual OSURA Past President's Luncheon

OSURA celebrates another win for Women's Basketball

Contributed by Terri Tower

Sixty OSURA members put their appetites on hold until after hearing remarks from Scott Rueck, OSU women's head basketball coach and guest speaker at the February 1 pre-game dinner.



About 60 OSURA members gathered for OSURA's pre-game dinner at LaSells Stewart Center.

Scott previewed the evening's upcoming game against Colorado, explaining the strategy of "starting small" and adjusting player positions to compensate for the loss of Kat Tudor, who went out with a season-ending injury in a game earlier in the season.

During the game, OSURA members watched the strategies in action and were treated to exciting performances by Destiny Slocum and Aleah Goodman, who nailed all six of her three-point shots. OSU defeated Colorado, 89-65.

Coach Rueck has addressed the OSURA group every year since his first year as head coach (2010-11), thanks largely to the late Kathy Heath, one of Scott's professors when he was a student at Oregon State. Kathy was instrumental in recruiting Scott to be our speaker for seven years in a row before turning the task over to others on the Program Committee. This marks the ninth year that Scott has been our speaker.

Following Scott's remarks, our group converged on the Mexican feast buffet provided by University Catering and helped themselves to enchiladas, rice, beans, salad, and cookies.



Jim Boyle along with Priscilla and Don Zobel enjoy the Mexican food fare served for the pre-game dinner.

Gymnastics meet and OSURA pre-meet dinner

Contributed by Terri Tower

Former OSU gymnasts Mandi Rodriguez and Stephanie McGregor charmed their OSURA audience with remembrances of competition and present-day activities at the March 15 women's gymnastics pre-meet dinner held at LaSells Stewart Center.

As "tag team" guest speakers, Mandi and Stephanie shared their experiences as former student athletes and in their current careers and personal lives. Both talked about changes in the counseling and training of student athletes, with more attention now paid to mental preparation and visualization, plus improvements in facilities and resources.



Former OSU gymnasts Mandi Rodriguez and Stephanie McGregor join OSURA host Bill Smart for the beef pot roast dinner preceding their talk at the March 15 pre-meet gymnastics dinner.

According to them, another major change in college gymnastics is the shift toward specialization. It's become less common to see competitors for all-around, opening up opportunities for more gymnasts to compete in their best events. This year's OSU team, for example, has 20 on its roster, not all of them scholarship athletes.

When asked what effect it has on gymnasts (before they perform) to see teammates fall on a routine, Mandi and Stephanie responded, "They have gone through their routines hundreds of times in practice.

Seeing a teammate fall should not cause them to lose confidence."

After finishing her undergraduate degree in Exercise and Sports Science, Mandi stayed at OSU to continue her studies, earning a master's degree focused on sports psychology. She now works as an Academic Counselor within Oregon State's athletic department, assigned to gymnastics, volleyball and the men's football offensive squad.

She jokingly alluded to some of the differences in counseling these very different groups of student athletes, "a gymnast might freak out over only a B+ on an exam," whereas some (but not all, she added) of the football players might be more concerned about maintaining passing grades. Mandi competed for OSU from 2007-10, earning both scholastic and gymnastics honors. She still maintains a presence during current gymnastics meets, doing a 'live-action' Twitter feed for OSU Athletics.

Mandi has two children, ages four and one, so manages daily 'balancing' -not on a beam, but with home and career.

Stephanie competed for Oregon State from 2009-13, graduating with scholastic honors in the College of Engineering. Although she lives in Portland, Stephanie maintains a close connection to OSU gymnastics, traveling to Corvallis for home gymnastics meets to provide commentary for the LIVE OSU-Pac-12 Webcast.

Stephanie works as an instrumentation and control systems engineer for Jacobs Engineering, formerly CH2M Hill, specializing in water treatment systems. She's had the opportunity to travel internationally on engineering projects, including a trip to Australia where she was able to reconnect with another former teammate. Stephanie said it's very rewarding to be on-site at a project she's designed to find out "it works!"

After competitive gymnastics, Stephanie has maintained a high level of physical activity. She bike-commutes to work -a true Portlander -and has started skiing again, an activity she loved as a child growing up in Canada but had to stop while doing gymnastics because of injury risk.

Because gymnastics took up at least 30 hours a week when they were students, both Mandi and Stephanie commented that they didn't quite know what to do with their spare

time when they "only had to go to work for 40 hours a week."

Following the pre-meet dinner, OSURA members watched the Oregon State team win a 'Senior Night' four-way meet with Iowa, North Carolina and Seattle Pacific.

The upcoming regional competition (April 4-6) in Corvallis features a change in the NCAA format. The 2019 post-season competition is the first year to have four regionals that last for three days, with two teams from each regional advancing to four-team semifinals at two sites. Four teams from the semifinals -two from each site -will advance to the nationals.

Bill Smart and Carol Kronstad organized the gymnastics pre-meet dinner and speakers as part of the OSURA Program Committee's event schedule.



OSURA Past President Tom Plant with his daughter and granddaughter at the gymnastics dinner. His granddaughter was one of the girls chosen to present flowers to the gymnasts after the meet.

Connecting people synonymous with Kathy Heath

Contributed by Susan Poole

Sell-out OSURA event dinners for OSU women's basketball and gymnastics are an enduring part of OSURA history. Members and guests sign up early to hear from coaches and athletes prior to enjoying an evening watching women's sports.

Kathy Heath was the remarkable organizer of these gatherings for many years. We're grateful for her efforts as these events have become a tradition for OSURA, the coaches and athletes. Chris Mathews, current OSURA president, recalls, "my early recollection of OSURA was when Kate and I attended a dinner before a Women's basketball game and heard Coach Ruck talk." Kathy helped make those types of connections for people, even future OSURA presidents!

Kathy passed away in March 2019. She is remembered for serving as OSURA president from 2007-08 and was an OSURA leader in many other ways. She was professor emeritus of OSU Exercise and Sport Science, and was recognized for her efforts in promoting women's access to organized sports. She was on the Intercollegiate Athletic Advisory Board, American Association of University Professors and president of the OSU Faculty Senate. She was assistant and then interim dean in the OSU College of Health and Human Performance (now the College of Public Health and Human Sciences). Her positive influence carried into the community including: Benton County Commission on Children and Families, Corvallis OSU Symphony, OSU Folk Club, Good Samaritan Hospital Foundation and Zonta International.

Kathy and her husband Ed were avid Beaver sports fans. Ed passed away in November 2018. They were married 64 years, had 5 children, 9 grandchildren and 7 great-grandchildren. Many family gatherings were held in their Corvallis and Metolius Meadows homes.

"I enjoyed my time working with Kathy," says Mealoha McFadden, OSURA support staff, "She genuinely cared about others and gathering OSURA members for events. The pre-game and pre-meet dinners with coaches are a legacy of her commitment to women's sports and a treat for OSURA members. She was a gem who will be missed by many."



Kathy Heath, 2007-08 OSURA President

Travels in Turkey with Jack & JoAnne Walstad

Contributed by Jack Walstad

35 people attended the spring Travelshare Program on March 14 where Jack and JoAnne Walstad shared some of the remarkable experiences and photos from their recent Rick Steve's tour of Turkey. It was their first trip to Asia and their first time in a Muslim country so it was an exotic experience for them! Sights ranged from the exquisite Mosques and towering minarets of Istanbul

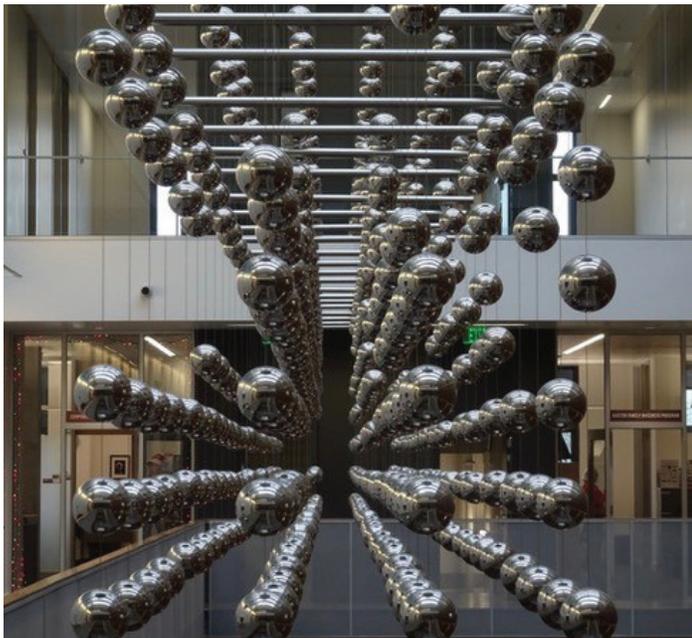
to the picturesque harbors along the Aegean Seacoast. In between, there was a splendid balloon ride over the volcanic landscape of Cappadocia in central Turkey. Virtually everywhere, there were ancient ruins and antiquities on display. So be sure to put Turkey on your "bucket list" if you want an amazing adventure!



Austin Hall Tour and OSIG Presentation

Contributed by Jack Walstad

Do you know there's a student group at Oregon State that manages a \$2.2 Million investment portfolio? And in Austin Hall there's a three-dimensional abacus that's 60 feet long?



Austin Hall's iconic art installation, a 60-foot long abacus that hangs from three floors above the digital commons.

OSURA members learned the affirmative answers to these questions and much more when 30 of us toured Austin Hall in January. The tour was followed by a detailed presentation by two student officers from the Oregon State Investment Group (OSIG), a student group that manages \$2 million-plus in investment portfolios.

Austin Hall opened in 2014 as the new home for the College of Business (COB). Tour highlights included high-tech classrooms, project rooms, student advising and career success centers, the digital commons, and the extraordinary 60-foot long stainless steel

abacus that hangs from three floors above the digital commons.



Participants in one of Austin Hall's classrooms.

While guiding us through the building from the top floor down, tour leaders Lily Beck and Jennifer Villalobos explained how the structure is designed for maximum faculty-student interaction and for students to work together, access computers and other equipment for projects, and develop their own ideas. Most of the space is bright, airy, and open or made visible by glass partitions and doors.



OSURA President Chris Mathews greets tour leaders Lily Beck and Jennifer Villalobos.

Tour leader Lily Beck, a senior business student, chairs the Women in Leadership club and also serves as a Program Assistant for the college. Jennifer Villalobos is a full-time Program Manager for the College of Business.

Austin Hall Tour and OSIG Presentation

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Following the tour, OSURA members convened in the Events Room on the main floor to eat cookies and hear OSIG officers Francis Thelen (President) and Nikki Frydenlund (Vice-President) discuss OSIG's activities and approaches for managing three different investment portfolios. OSURA members joined the lively discussion, duly impressed by Francis and Nikki's sophistication and professionalism.



OSURA members gather in Austin Hall's "Marketplace" living room prior to the tour.



OSIG President Francis Thelen and Vice-President Nikki Frydenlund discuss the student club's investment strategies with OSURA members.

One of their portfolios is the D.A. Davidson competition portfolio (DADCO) in which OSIG competes annually with 20 other West Coast schools. The object of the competition is to come up with the highest investment return on an initial starting value of \$50,000. The competition resets each year at the \$50K mark.

OSIG was founded in 2007 by a small group of students who collaborated with the OSU Foundation and school alumni to raise over \$1M in start-up funds. Membership in the club is a competitive process involving an application and interview. The club currently has 24 members who meet every Friday morning to make "pitches" and analyze data on companies for potential investments. Although OSIG's main objective is to maximize profits, Nikki and Francis say for them the real goal is to maximize the learning experiences of each student in the group.



Ray Brooks, retired Finance faculty member and OSURA Program Committee member, introduces student officers from OSIG and talks about the history of the club's founding.

To learn more about their investment portfolios and investing strategies, visit the OSIG website to read their Annual Report: www.oregonstateinvestmentgroup.com.

What's happening? SAVE THESE DATES!

Thursday, May 23

1:30-4:30 p.m. OSURA Annual Meeting and Member Social

OSU Foundation Board Room,
4238 SW Research Way, Corvallis, Oregon

Thursday, June 13 from 3 to 7 p.m.

Tuesday, June 18 from 12 to 3 p.m.

Thursday, June 27 from 3 to 7 p.m.

Volunteer Opportunity: Human Services Resource Center Food Pantry

Champinefu Lodge,
1030 SW Madison Avenue, Corvallis, Oregon
Contact HSRC@oregonstate.edu to volunteer.

OSURA Golf Interest Group

Play starts in May with various dates through October
Trysting Tree Golf Course

For more info, contact Jim Krueger at **541-753-7257** or jkrueger@proaxis.com.

Fall 2019

OSURA Fall Kickoff event – Stay tuned!

For more information on all our upcoming events visit, osura.oregonstate.edu.

Renew Your Membership!

Being an OSURA member is a great way to stay connected to OSU and friends at the university. The Oregon State University Retirement Association (OSURA) promotes engagement among OSU retirees and between retirees and the University by providing information, programs, scholarships and volunteer service opportunities that contribute to a rewarding retirement and that support the University's mission.

Full membership in the OSU Retirement Association is open to all retirees from Oregon State University! Becoming a member is a great way to stay involved in the life of the university. Our members make possible many important programs for students and retirees.

Memberships are \$20 individual/\$30 household and checks can be made out to OSURA/OSU Foundation. Membership forms can be found on our website at: osura.oregonstate.edu.



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OSURA Mission Statement

The Oregon State University Retirement Association (OSURA) promotes engagement among OSU retirees and between retirees and the University by providing information, programs, scholarships and volunteer service opportunities that contribute to a rewarding retirement and that support the University's mission.