

# OSURA News & Views

Winter 2018

## OSURA News & Views

### OSURA Fall Start-Up Event

Contributed by Jack Walstad

Over 50 OSURA members and guests attended the annual Fall Start-Up Event held in the Horizon Room at the OSU Memorial Union on October 18, 2017. The event began with a wonderful dinner of salmon, chicken, and other items provided by Valley Catering. Dinner was followed by a program on “OSU150: understanding the past, differentiating the present, and transforming the future.” OSURA President Tom Plant introduced the speakers, Shelly Signs and Larry Landis. They delivered a “tag-team” presentation that was both lively and enlightening.

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Harriet's Photograph Collection, Oregon State University  
Special Collections and Archives Research Center

### History: OSU Enters Its 150th Year

Contributed by Les Risser, Bill Wilkins, Kathy Meddaugh and Gale Hazel

As OSU enters its 150th year of existence, OSURA decided to look back at our own history and founding. We have combined the memories of our founders into a short memoir of our beginning from the people who lived it. Several original founders contributed to this article: Les Risser, wife of then-OSU President Paul Risser; Kathy Meddaugh, Faculty Personnel Assistant; Bill Wilkins, Dean of Liberal Arts and Gale Hazel, University Advancement AKA University Events. George Keller was not available for this project.

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#### OSURA Board Members 2017-2018

<b>President:</b>	Tom Plant	<b>Members at Large:</b>	Judy Burridge
<b>President-Elect:</b>	Chris Matthews		Carol Kronstad
<b>Past President:</b>	Jack Walstad		Phyllis Lee
<b>Secretary:</b>	Betty Miner		Cheryl Lyons
<b>Treasurer:</b>	Kelvin Koong		Gordon Reistad
			Tony Van Vliet

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**Oregon State**  
University



## President's Message

By Tom Plant

Dear OSURA Members:

Happy New Year! I hope 2018 will be a rewarding year for all of you. Your OSURA board has been working hard to bring you many interesting activities in the year ahead.

We had a well-attended Fall Kickoff meeting in October with a program on the OSU150 celebration of OSU's 150th anniversary this year. You can read more about this program in the newsletter. In light of this historical event, Kathy Motley, our newsletter editor, reached out to the founders of OSURA for their

recollections of just how OSURA came to be. These very interesting submissions are the feature story of this newsletter. It is a bit longer than usual, but we felt it was an excellent reconstruction of the early beginnings of OSURA.

Your Program Committee has also been hard at work and has lined up several events. In November we had a wonderful tour of the National Clonal Germplasm Repository (Say that 3 times quickly!) and learned how seeds are preserved to protect plant species. Coming up on January 27 is an afternoon gymnastics meet with light dinner and head coaches talk after. On February 16 will be dinner, words from Coach Rueck, and an evening women's basketball game. Then on May 2 a joint OSURA/ALL bus trip to Portland is planned to visit the OSU150 exhibit at the Oregon Historical Society.

We always enjoy sharing the OSURA experience with new members. If you know of someone retiring soon or recently retired from OSU, please tell them about OSURA and invite them to join.

Best wishes for a wonderful 2018,

Tom Plant  
OSURA President  
2017-2018



The OSU150 Sea Grant Festival is part of OSU150, a year-long celebration of OSU's 150th anniversary. Join us in celebrating Oregon State University's many years of stewardship—in protecting our coasts and oceans, and all who depend on them. Learn how our dedicated faculty are discovering new frontiers, educating current and future generations and working with communities to solve today's most pressing issues. Grab a friend or two and please think about attending one of our many events: [communications.oregonstate.edu/sea](http://communications.oregonstate.edu/sea).

## Renew your membership!

Being an OSURA member is a great way to stay connected to OSU and friends at the university.

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](http://osura.oregonstate.edu).

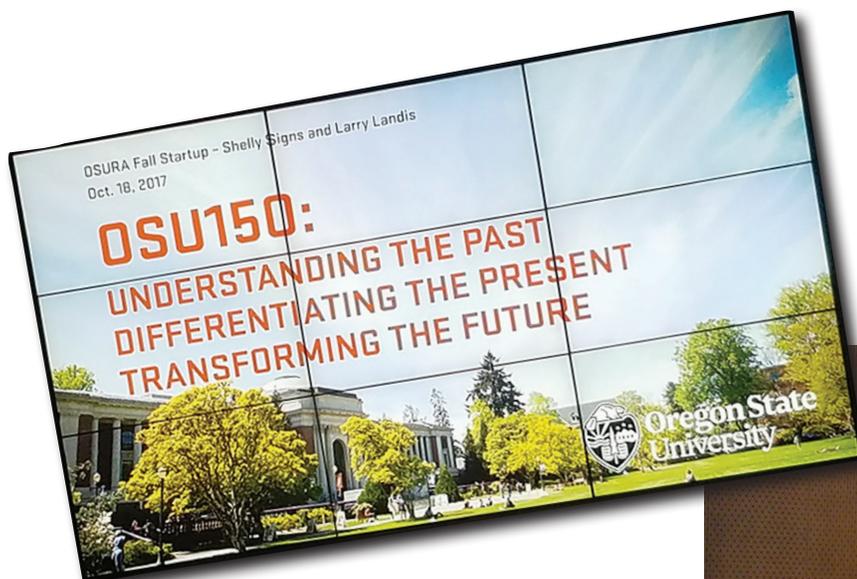
# OSURA Fall Start-Up Event

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Shelly Signs is the Executive Director of OSU150, and she talked about the evolution of OSU from its land grant days as an agricultural college in 1868 to its emerging roles in contemporary science, culture, and education in the year 2018—a 150-year period. She also talked about the current celebration underway for the next year that includes:

1. A 7-month exhibit at the Oregon Historical Society in Portland beginning on February 9, 2018.
2. Several festivals, traveling exhibits, and special events throughout the state that will feature OSU150 activities.
3. Upcoming programs on OPB and other venues that will highlight OSU150 material.
4. A website, [OSU150.org](http://OSU150.org), that provides up-to-date information about OSU150, including access to a downloadable app.

Larry Landis is the Director of Special Collections and Archives Research Center at OSU. He illustrated the historical development of OSU through a series of remarkable photographs gleaned from the OSU Archives. They ranged from the first women's basketball team in 1898 (even before there was a men's team in 1901!) to Nobel Laureate Linus Pauling and his wife, Ava, in the mid-20th century. He also featured several notable campus buildings and master plans over the years. It was a fascinating walk down memory lane! 🐉



Shelly Signs and Larry Landis

# History: OSU Enters Its 150th Year

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As outlined in the OSURA website:

*During the summer of 2001, a group of retired and actively employed OSU faculty and staff met to discuss the need for an OSU retirement association. Unlike most comparable institutions, OSU did not have an organization for retired faculty and staff. In September of that year, a steering committee was formed, including OSU retirees Kathy Meddaugh, George Keller (former Vice-President for Research), and Bill Wilkins (former Dean of Liberal Arts), plus other retired and current administrators, faculty and staff. Particularly helpful to the committee was the active participation of Les Risser, wife of former OSU President Paul Risser. The Oregon State University Retirement Association (OSURA) received official recognition in December 2001 in a letter from President Risser granting OSURA affiliate status with the OSU Foundation, as required by OUS 580-046-00205.*

## Memories from Kathy Meddaugh

The majority of my professional career was spent working in the Oregon State University Administration Building. In the 1970's and 1980's, employees frequented a cafeteria located next door, called The Gallery. It was a great place to grab a bite to eat, take a break, and/or socialize with friends and colleagues. One thing I noticed was how frequently several groups of staff or faculty members would congregate to just spend time together. The conversations could be lively and stimulating.

My position as Faculty Personnel Assistant, housed in Human Resources, required that I have frequent interaction with the Dean of Faculty, David Nicodemus. He could exude a rather formal and aloof demeanor but we had a good working relationship. In 1985, my position was moved to the 6th floor of the Administration Building and I began working on a daily basis with Dean Nicodemus. I began to think of him as not only a colleague but as a true friend. Even though we had many "heated" discussions, he was always supportive and helpful in my efforts to learn new skills and professionally advance. During that time, I began to see how much the university meant to him. His wife had died a few years before and he had no children. In other words, the university was his life.

On July 1, 1986, my new husband and I were on our honeymoon, heading to Victoria, British Columbia. As I sat in the Anacortes ferry terminal, I remembered that it was Dean Nicodemus' birthday. He was turning 70 that day. Back then, tenured faculty members were required to retire at 70. I called the office to wish

Dr. Nicodemus Happy Birthday and could hear his sadness. I tried to make light of this new chapter in his life and he became very quiet. It was apparent that he didn't view retirement as an opportunity; he felt the majority of his life was ending.

With so much interaction with faculty and staff, I found that many other employees felt the same way. There is a perception that your "worth" is tied to contributions made in your academic discipline, research, or work place. Many employees put in 50 – 60 hour weeks; bring work home; miss family and social activities as a result of their "responsibilities". Work is a "constant", a dependable stability. When you retire, it's frightening to not have that safety net.

Following Dr. Nicodemus' retirement, I was promoted to Academic Personnel Officer and frequently had to call him for clarification about an academic personnel matter. He had never learned to use a computer but he would come on campus, doing research projects for the Budget Office, Faculty Senate, or various departments that knew he would be interested in helping them. He had a sparkle in his eye when he was allowed to go to Archives and research some of their files. In 1999, Dr. David Nicodemus died. I deeply felt the loss of a wonderful friend and colleague.

In my role as Academic Personnel Officer in Academic Affairs, I would interact with faculty and staff on a daily basis. There were tenure relinquishment programs, retirement programs (for both classified and faculty), as well as phone and email contacts regarding retirement.

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## History: OSU Enters Its 150th Year

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One thing that continued to surface was that many didn't know what they were going to do after they retired. Men in particular get their identities wrapped up in what they do for a living, and once that's gone, if there's not something else there to fill the space, retirees can suffer depression.

This recurrent theme continued to surface. Following several demographic studies, it appeared that at least 2/3 of the population wished to remain in the Corvallis or surrounding areas. Particularly in a small town like Corvallis and surrounding areas, you continue to be "tied" to Oregon State, even if you no longer receive a paycheck or have an office.

Working in the Administration Building, I would frequently run into George Keller. I would share some thoughts about a retirement club or some form of an organization. This went on for several years. I think he mentioned it to Bill Wilkins and got the ball rolling. George, Bill, and I met for coffee and started some brainstorming about the possibility of a retirement organization. Pretty soon, we included Gale Hazel, who worked for University Advancement. After that, things just started to roll. More and more people started showing an interest.

While faculty had the largest impact in the development of this organization, there was always an understanding that classified would be included.

OSURA is the sort of organization that Dave Nicodemus would have loved. An opportunity to still feel connected to the university, as well as volunteer and/or share life and learning experiences with other university community members.

### Memories from Les Risser

In the summer of 2001, momentum began to build to establish an organization for our retired faculty and staff. Comparable universities had initiated such organizations and the value of maintaining relationships with retirees through a somewhat structured group was acknowledged.

With the extraordinary leadership and commitment of Kathy Meddaugh, George Keller, Bill Wilkins, and Gale Hazel, a plan was launched. I was honored to participate with this group as we discussed options and looked at other university models. A mission which promoted on-going engagement through information, campus programs, and volunteer opportunities was adopted. Paul was on board from the start of these discussions and granted official affiliate status with the OSU Foundation in December 2001. We were thrilled!

I remember this time as being so exciting as we considered if and how a lifelong learning component would be incorporated into this fledgling organization. The Academy for Lifelong Learning was a result of those early discussions. We also recognized that we would need to market this organization by emphasizing the benefits of retiree participation – the fun and continued engagement with the University, without the requirement of all those pre-retirement committee meetings! Our inaugural event was a great success and I am pleased to see the growth since then. I continue to be in awe of the invaluable contributions that retired faculty and staff make to our campus.

And I am also delighted to see that this organization remains in good hands with the leadership of Tom Plant and an incredible board. Many congratulations to all for making our early dream a reality!

### Memories from Bill Wilkins

My memory is that Kathy Meddaugh was thinking ahead about her own retirement and had discovered that other universities, notably, the University of Washington, had active organizations involving and supporting their retirees but the we didn't. Kathy brought that to the attention of George Keller who, in turn, contacted me. At that time I was president of AROSE, the Association of Retired Oregon State Employees (nee, AROPE, the Association of Retired Oregon State Employees), a long standing group which met virtually every month for lunch and a program (usually a speaker) of interest to retirees.

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## History: OSU Enters Its 150th Year

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With Kathy's guidance I did a mini-web search to learn a bit about for myself what other universities were doing and why. For example if one typed in OSURA what came up was the organization at Ohio State University. It seemed clear to me that starting one at Oregon State was a good idea. From then on it was a matter finding people who were interested and willing to help with their work, ideas, and influence to put it together. Les Risser came on board early and was instrumental in arranging for President Risser to create a connection between what became OSURA and the Oregon State University Foundation.

In the midst of this activity there was a contact with our group, I think from continuing education, about bringing into being an associated organization devoted to learning opportunities for older people. We worked on that too and spun off what became the Academy for Lifelong Learning (ALL) with an association with OSU's alumni organization.

In my memory somewhat later we approached President Ray, early in his tenure, for funding for OSURA which he provided in spite of a very tight budget situation.

I was pleased that Les included Gail Hazel in the founding group. For a long time I was given credit for bringing into being the golf event at Trysting Tree Golf Course which opened OSURA's academic year. In reality, Gail suggested it, as she did other things. All I did was to find somebody who could and would do it: Bill Brennan as I recall.

## Memories from Gale Hazel

My memories? What I recall is that it was a fun and exciting time. Our ad hoc group was doing something new and untried, but support and interest among retirees and university administration was really positive and growing. The organization had the potential to be beneficial to the University on many fronts; activities enabled retirees to stay connected, and members provided support for university programs and events.

For me, I enjoyed and benefited very much from having a wonderful, caring, and encouraging group of mentors to learn from and work for during those early years. I cherish those relationships to this day. 🌸

## WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

### Les Risser

I moved to the Denver area after Paul's death. My three youngest grandkids live near so I am very involved in their lives (basketball games, swim meets, dance recitals, etc.) - they bring me a lot of joy. The rest of my family is in Oregon, Texas and Montana and I love traveling to visit them all. I am a board member for the district's public school foundation which keeps me in touch with the education system here. I also volunteer with a local theatre and arts center - a very happy place. In addition, I take lifelong learning classes through the University of Denver. Paul and I loved being at OSU.

### Bill Wilkins

Caroline and I are mostly ok and plan to go from San Antonio, Texas, where we now live in a retirement community to Enterprise, Alabama, to spend time with our son and his family.

### Kathy Meddaugh

Kathy and Gary have purchased a new home in North Albany and are very active in the Presbyterian Church Choir going on many international trips with the group as well as enjoying their new home.

### Gale Hazel

I've been performing with, and serving on the board of the Corvallis Repertory Singers, just recently stepping down as president this year. This past spring I completed a certificate in graphic design, a long-time area of interest of mine, which I hope to parlay into some part-time work with non-profits. I'm also looking forward to doing more traveling with my husband as he considers possibly retiring this year.

# Travel Share Presentation: Cuba

Contributed by Jack Walstad

On November 2, 2017 about 30 OSURA members enjoyed a presentation by Jane and Roy Arnold on their recent tour of Cuba. It was the latest in an enlightening series of Travel Share programs coordinated by Jim Krueger. Jane and Roy gave a well-illustrated recap of their OAT (Overseas Adventure Travel) trip to this island nation 90 miles south of Florida, billed as a “cultural exchange experience” to comply with U.S. restrictions on travel to this country by U.S. citizens. Their talk featured topics ranging from historic buildings (and some vintage automobiles!) in Old Town Havana to more modern architecture like that found in Trinidad. Along the way they sampled a wide variety of Cuban culture including music, art, food, entrepreneurship, coffee plantations, transportation, and other aspects of contemporary Cuban life. They even saw memorable tributes to Ernest Hemmingway, Che Guevara, Fidel Castro, and other legendary figures! It was quite an adventure, and we thoroughly enjoyed their sharing it with us. 🎨



Roy Arnold displays a map of Cuba covering some of the sites they visited.



Some of the exhibits collected during Jane & Roy's visit to Cuba.



Jim Krueger introduces Jane & Roy Arnold prior to their presentation on Cuba.



An attentive OSURA audience enjoys the talk on Cuba.



Jane Arnold describing some of the activities their tour group did in Cuba.

## Plant Repository Tour

Contributed by Terri Tower

Next time you drive by the sign “World Plant Collections” on Peoria Road, think about passionate plant people faithfully tending more than 12,000 pieces of plant material, just so you personally can have the best blueberries in the whole world.

Well okay, that’s not the official brochure language for the USDA’s National Clonal Germplasm Repository (NCGR), but it could be. When 21 OSURA’s met the staff of this Agricultural Research Service facility in November, we immediately were captivated by the staff’s enthusiasm and excitement for plants and plant foods and by their dedication to creating and sustaining the bountiful harvests of fruits, nuts and berries that we enjoy in the Willamette Valley.

As they guided us through the labs and greenhouses, staff members talked about DNA analysis, genetic fingerprinting, molecular and tissue cultures, cryogenic



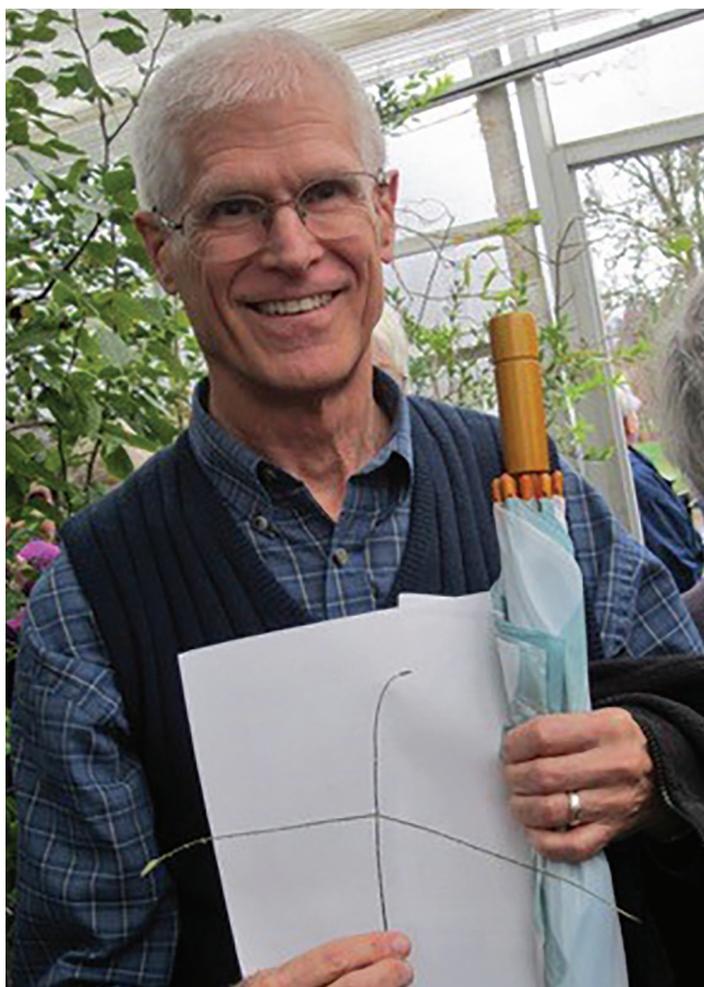
Greenhouse Manager Jim Oliphant shows one of many blueberry greenhouse cultivars to OSURA members.

preservation, shipping of plant material, international treaties, and assisting plant breeders and researchers to develop the best blueberries, blackberries, hazelnuts, pears, strawberries, raspberries, mint, hops, currants, and other temperate fruits, nuts and specialty crops important to our region.

After two hours immersed in presentations, labs and greenhouses, we left the parking lot talking about accessions, cultivars, *Rubus*, *Pyrus* and *Vaccinium* as if we were old hands at plant identification and analysis.

According to NCGR Director Dr. Kim Hummer, pears and hops are two of the current “hot items” in our region. Because hard ciders have regained popularity, many commercial cider makers are interested in experimenting with different varieties of pears for cider brewing. Likewise due to the surge in popularity of beer microbrews, there’s increased interest in hop varieties that create new flavors.

For many of us on the tour, our new word for the day was “accession,” a piece of plant material from a single species collected at one time from a specific location. Each accession is an attempt to capture the diversity present in a given population of plants.



OSURA President Tom Plant gets ‘stuck’ with a spiny leaf from a New Zealand “bush lawyer” blackberry.

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## Plant Repository Tour

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The Corvallis Repository's collection contains a total of 12,340 of these accessions, representing plants from 71 different genus categories on a list ranging from A to Z - from *Actinidia* (Hardy Kiwifruit) to *Zelkova*. The largest numbers of accessions in the Corvallis collection are for pears, blackberry/raspberries, blueberries and strawberries.

The Repository includes 60 acres of field plantings and 30,000 square feet of potted plants under shelter. OSURA members didn't wander into the orchards on this rainy November day, but enjoyed the blackberry and blueberry greenhouses, where we learned about a tropical blueberry variety that grows 25-50 feet tall on the volcanic slopes of Malaysian and Indonesian islands.

The Corvallis NCGR, one of only 30 similar federal facilities located throughout the country, is dedicated to preserving economically important crops and their wild relatives. It functions within the USDA and the Agricultural Research Service as part of the National Plant Germplasm System headquartered in Ft. Collins, CO.

The tag line on the NCGR brochure might sum it up best for OSURA members impressed by the work accomplished at the facility: "*We will preserve this diverse living germplasm for all people for all time.*" For us that means, come summer, we still will have the best blueberries in the whole world. 



Tissue Culture Manager Jeanine DeNoma describes the various steps involved in creating and saving tissue culture.

## What's Happening? SAVE THESE DATES:

### Friday, February 16

Women's Basketball  
Pre-Game Dinner and  
Basketball Game (UCLA)  
LaSells Stewart Center  
Sign-up begins the  
week of January 27

### Thursday, March 15

Travelshare Group Meeting  
OSU Foundation  
Board Room  
3:00 p.m.

### Wednesday, May 2

Field Trip to Oregon  
Historical Center Museum  
Portland Bus transport  
will be available  
Watch for February  
sign-up information

### Friday, May 18

OSU Theater,  
George Orwell's 1984  
OSURA presentation by  
Director prior to play

Visit our website for more  
information on all our  
upcoming events,  
[osura.oregonstate.edu](http://osura.oregonstate.edu).

## 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.