

Jan and Dave Dobak

Dave was born in 1946 in New York and grew up in New York and Washington, DC. His earliest memories of being inspired by plants were on family visits to the New York Botanical Garden. He earned degrees in Electrical Engineering from the University of Colorado and Stanford University. Moving to the Rocky Mountains opened a new viewpoint on plants. In 1973 he moved to Oregon, where he worked for Tektronix in Beaverton for 27 years; he retired in 2001.

Jan Anderson was born in 1947 in Ohio; her family soon moved west to live successively in Montana, Oregon, and Washington. Her earliest memories of plants date back to family backpacking trips in the Olympic Mountains. She earned a degree in Biology from Eastern Washington University. A course in field botany, and frequent visits to Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge shifted her attention from marine biology to botany. She moved to Oregon in 1972 and worked in the laboratory at Good Samaritan Hospital in Portland for 27 years; she retired in 2001.

Their paths had not yet crossed when, coincidentally, in 1984 they both joined the Portland Chapter of the Native Plant Society of Oregon (NPSO). Lois Kemp recruited them to lead a field trip for the NPSO Annual Meeting in May 1987. One thing led to another and in February 1988, they were married at the Leach Botanical Garden in Portland.

Jan started editing the NPSO Bulletin in January of 1986—the era of typewriters and white-out, when “cut and paste” involved scissors and glue. Using NPSO’s first MacIntosh computer, Jan and Dave worked together to bring the Bulletin into the computer age. They passed the editorship to their successor in July 1989.

By May 1991, they had sufficiently recovered from the demands of producing the monthly Bulletin to assume the duties of Membership Chair. Together they handled all the membership responsibilities for the State until October 2003, a period of more than twelve years. They still serve as members of the Membership Committee, as well as the Budget Committee. They have produced the biennial Membership Directory since 1988, and have brought it into the computer age as well, with most of the directories now going out electronically as PDF (Portable Document Files).

Each one has served several terms on the State Board of Directors. For decades, they rarely missed State Board meetings.



Dave assisted Jean France during her years as State Treasurer in the late 1990s.

They have led numerous field trips, both for their chapter and for State Annual Meetings. Catherine Creek, Grassy Knoll, Lookout Mountain, and the Siskiyou Mountains number among their favorite destinations.

They also served twice as Portland Chapter Vice-President (for Programs). They suggested the first “extra-territorial” NPSO Annual Meeting, which was sponsored by the Portland Chapter in John Day in 2003. Their botanical travels in Switzerland, Italy, Chile, Australia, South Africa, Wyoming, and Nevada have put them in demand as speakers, and they have generously provided programs for many chapters.

Irrepressible joiners, they are members of the California, Washington, Montana, Wyoming and Big Horn Native Plant Societies, the Hardy Plant Society of Oregon, the North American Rock Garden Society, the (British) Alpine Garden Society, the Scottish Rock Garden Club, the Botanical Society of South Africa, the Wildflower Society of Western Australia, and the Western Australia Native Orchid Society.

Although their home garden is not restricted to Oregon native plants, it does emphasize plants in their natural state, rather than genetically modified horticultural hybrids or cultivars—sort of a “native plants of the whole world” garden.

—Jim Duncan, Siskiyou Chapter