

*Garth Julius Skaar*

*September 17, 1938 – January 10, 2015*

Garth J. Skaar, 76, of Corvallis, Oregon passed away peacefully at Evergreen Hospice House in Albany on the afternoon of January 10 due to the toll taken in recovering from a blood infection and other internal ailments. At the end, he was surrounded by, and in the arms of, many loving family members who, while sad for ourselves, are joyful at the peace he now has.

Garth was born in the afternoon on the second story of a house in Arnegard, North Dakota, just as a bagpipe troupe was passing on the street during a local parade. Though of nearly 100% Norwegian decent, Garth always maintained that his lifelong love of all things Irish was due to this welcome into the world.

Garth's early years were full of moves throughout North Dakota, Montana, and Oregon due to his father's work on large project construction sites. He even lived in the short-lived town of Vanport, Oregon, for a short time. (Look that story up!)

Garth, with help from family and close friends, was able to spend his high school years in Kalispell, Montana. Those were eventful years of cars, motorcycles, music (he played tuba), skiing, many, many jobs (including pin setting at a local bowling alley), hiking, square dancing and a growing appreciation for education. It was the last two that brought him together with his eventual wife, Mary Janet Hughes. They met at a dance after which they became friends and then sweethearts. Her father was a teacher with whom Garth eventually studied to become a teacher in his own right. Jack, Jan's father, also started him in his lifelong love/hate relationship with the sport of golf

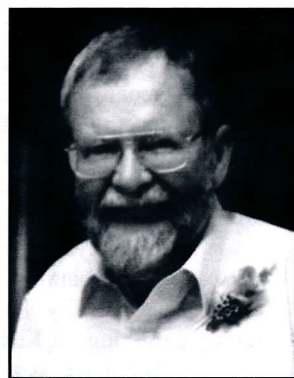
Upon graduation, Garth signed up for a four-year stint in the Navy. Two weeks later, he was honorably discharged due to his poor eyesight. He then turned his sights back to education and enrolled in Northern Montana College, taking on any and all jobs to pay his way, from furniture delivery to summers on a fire lookout.

On June 15, 1961, after his junior year of college, Garth and Jan were married. That summer and the next were spent high up in that fire lookout tower, and during the second year, Jan was carrying their first child.

After graduating with a degree in business education, Garth began his teaching career in Ely, Nevada. It was during their three years in Ely their two children, Brian and Vicki, were born.

Both Jan and Garth yearned for a landscape more like Montana, and, during a trip to interview for a job in Eugene, they passed through Oakridge, Oregon, and thought it ideal. Garth stopped to inquire about teaching positions and then headed on to his interview. When he arrived at the Eugene school, there was a message awaiting him with a job offer in Oakridge. They turned around, and he began his thirty-year teaching career at Oakridge High School.

Those were eventful years! Besides teaching business (including typing on those old manual machines), he taught driver's ed, announced football and basketball games, started and ran the ski club, and coached golf. Outside of school, Garth included his family in even more adventure. Many summers (and some winter



breaks) were spent on Flathead Lake, Montana, where water skiing, hiking in Glacier National, constant house projects with the relatives, swimming off the homemade (some say dangerous) floating dock, and enjoying the large laughter filled family time around the beach fires. He joined Ski Patrol at Willamette Pass (back when it was two ropes and a Poma lift) which allowed his family to ski and taught him first aid at a high level (which he had to use way more than he wanted away from the ski area).

Motorcycling and camping were a huge part of his life then. Riding the mud flats and trails, hauling motorcycles all over Oregon on adventures, camping in the Cascades especially Waldo Lake, Cultus Lakes, and Big Marsh, and those wacky family gatherings at Kah-Nee-Tah were all cherished times.

There was swimming on the North Fork, bicycling constantly including touring the San Juans and miles and miles along the roads collecting cans and bottles (it was right after the bottle bill had passed and to us, it was free money gained through adventure!), and kayaking (he built two beautiful Folboats). One year he got his pilot's license and a small plane for a short try at flying (he didn't like heights). He took up stained glass work, did large and small house projects (which he found interesting and enjoyed) and yard projects (which he never enjoyed, mostly because they never ended...). Throughout, he continued traveling with family and an ever-growing circle of friends and the years were marked by good humor and activity.

In 1987, Garth had a motorcycle crash that permanently cost him the use of his right arm. With great spirit, he was determined to continue to live fully. He taught eight more years and retired in 1995 after 33 years of teaching.

After seven years of travel, singing with the Eugene Gleemen and reading, he and Jan moved to Corvallis, in with their daughter and closer to their son in Philomath. Over the next few years they oversaw the building of their first new house, which they moved into in 2004.

While the aftermath of Garth's crash from many years before became more challenging, the years in Corvallis were joyful. Being a beloved part of the lives of seven grandchildren from birth through college, gaining new friends, keeping up with old friends, traveling with family (including bucket list trips to Alaska and the Panama Canal), and always reading, were fitting final years.

Throughout his life, Garth was known for his kind and clever sense of humor, his curiosity and desire to learn, and his deep connections with people. He never hesitated to try, to go on the adventure, to help with the project, or to dance.

Garth was preceded in death by his brother Harold Skaar of Spokane, and his brother-in-laws Carl Nagel, Ron Mushlitz, and Joe Potoczny.

Garth is survived by his loving wife, Mary Janet (Jan); his sister, Susan Mushlitz of Spokane; his sister, Niki, and husband, Rich Weatherly, of Spokane; his daughter, Vicki, husband, David Guenther, and their sons, Jayce, Derek and Ryan of Corvallis; his son Brian, wife, Linda, and their sons, Andrew of Ventura, California, Conlin and wife, Jessie, of Hillsboro, and Bryson and daughter, Dana, of Philomath; his sister-in-laws Nancy Potoczny, Patty Nagel, and many grand nephews and nieces.

A memorial service, with a reception following, will be held Saturday, January 24, at 1:00 PM at Peace Lutheran church, 2540 Applegate, Philomath. It will be a time to remember Garth's immense impact on so many and share stories of a life well lived.