

Frank Alexander Lang
May 14, 1937 - June 26, 2019

Frank was born in Olympia, Washington, and spent his childhood roaming the surrounding woods and fields as well as the shores of Puget Sound. From these experiences, he decided that his life's ambition was to be a biologist. He was fortunate that his Boy Scout merit badge counselor was naturalist Margaret McKenny, author of *The Savory Wild Mushroom*. He spent a good part of his high school years on field trips with Margaret and her friends, a highlight of which was meeting Roger Tory Peterson.

He majored in botany at Oregon State College and there met his wife, Suzanne. He worked filing specimens and drawing plants for his systematic botany instructor, Dr. Albert N. Steward, director of the herbarium. Frank planned to pursue his interest in ferns in graduate school at the University of Washington, but was diverted by Dr.



Arthur Kruckeberg whose project was to determine why Douglas-fir was invading the gravelly prairies of western Washington. After concluding that the cause was lack of regular fires since European settlement, Frank decided it was time to seek a PhD. He met T.M.C. Taylor at the University of British Columbia, who suggested a taxonomic treatment of the *Polypodium vulgare* complex. Frank's thesis, completed in 1965, worked out the evolutionary relationship and taxonomy of three taxa using comparative morphology, cytology, and geographical-ecological criteria. This work was later confirmed by DNA and isozyme analyses.



Frank taught botany, ecology, and botanical illustration at Southern Oregon College for 31 years, from 1966 to 1996. He also served as department chair and chairman of the Faculty Senate. He taught biological illustration at the Malheur Field Station for eight summers. After he retired from teaching, he worked for the Medford District of the BLM, concentrating on the Ashland Resource Area. One of his passions was the Cascade/Siskiyou Ecological Emphasis Area, which later became the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument. Starting in 1989 he became Mr. Nature Notes. With his signature wit and humor, he commented on topics related to the flora and fauna of Southern Oregon and Northern California. He produced over 300 radio scripts broadcast weekly on Jefferson Public Radio, and a selected script was published in each issue of the Jefferson Monthly. Many of these pieces are in his books, *A Nature Notes Sampler Vols. 1 & 2*.

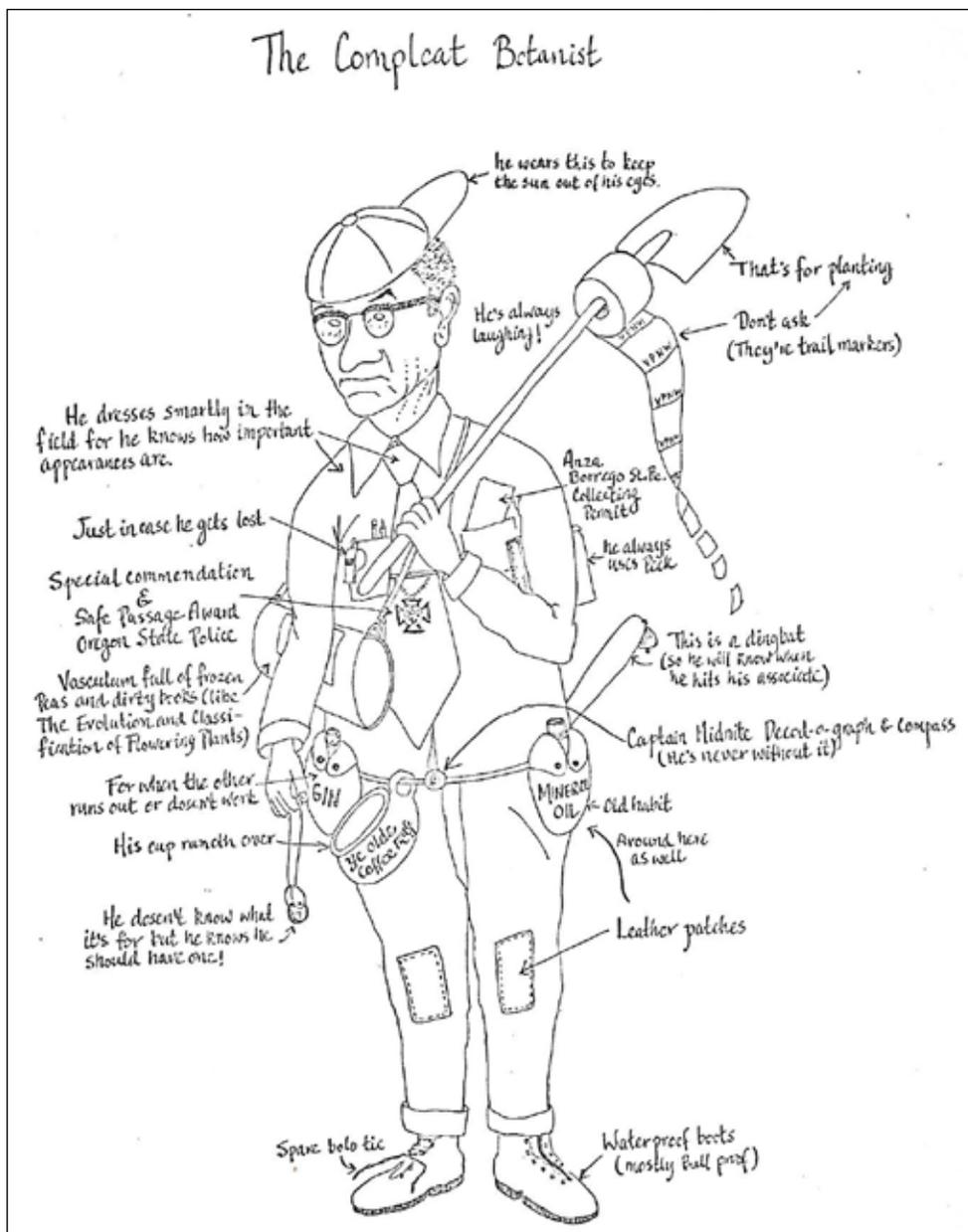
Frank served three terms as president of NPSO (1985/1986, 1979/1980, 1980/1981), was a "Founding Father" of the Siskiyou Chapter (1977), and co-edited the Bulletin from 1979-1981. He was the first editor of the annual journal, *Kalmiopsis* (1991-1994), and served on the journal's editorial board from 2004 through 2015. He was author or co-author of four articles in *Kalmiopsis*, including "John Jeffrey in the Wild West: Speculations on His Life and Times (1828-1854?)," "Green-flowered Wild Ginger (*Asarum wagneri*)," and "Botanizers in the Land of Conifers," and numerous book reviews.

Frank was honored as NPSO Fellow in 2000. He has also won many awards for his research, publications and volunteer work, including 1990 Volunteer of the Year for

The Nature Conservancy of Oregon. His interests included history of botanical exploration of the Pacific Northwest, fern evolution, threatened and endangered plants, and Charles Darwin in the Southern Hemisphere, Patagonia and Tasmania. He also contributed a large number of online entries for the Oregon Encyclopedia; as he said, "he is computer literate" (and he has a sense of humor).

In his role as teacher and advocate for the natural world, Frank touched many lives. He will be remembered for his dry wit, irreverent sense of humor, and terribly wonderful puns.

After his memorial was published in Botanical Electronic News (BEN) by Adolf Ceska in British Columbia, an old classmate of Frank's from his University of Washington days contacted me. Jack Maze sent me some stories and samples of Frank's caricatures of botanists, shared here. These feature C. Leo Hitchcock and Clarence Muhlick, his



assistant in the Botany Department. Hitchy's birthday was a big deal in the Botany Dept. and one year, Frank drew a caricature of him on the chalk board and wrote, "Happy Birthday Hitchy, you S.O.B." Then in much smaller letters added "silly old botanist." Frank often drew a little mouse in the corner, making comments. I have to assume that it was his animal persona in his artwork. —Cindy Roché, Editor, with thanks to Joan Seevers who wrote Frank's story for his Fellows award.