

Oregon State University Extension Service

METRO CONNECTION

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Introducing our RECAN member Patty Bonney



A longtime OSU Extension enthusiast and advocate, Patty Bonney is an avid knitter. "Knitting helps me concentrate because when my hands are busy, my mind is still," said a beaming Bonney. Friends often comment on her infectious smile and cheerful presence.

What people may not know is that this 88-year-old has had enough adventures to fill three lifetimes. From the time she rented a camper van and toured across Australia, took a six-month trip through Turkey and Europe, and adventured in Fiji, Western Samoa and Tonga, Patty has checked 40 countries, six continents and countless milestones off her bucket list. Often traveling alone, she made acquaintances all over the world who turned into lifelong friends.

Born in Missoula, Montana, she and her siblings loved to roam the countryside and accompany their dad on his fishing expeditions. Patty's father earned a PhD that led him into a career teaching Pacific Northwest history. The family moved around the country and finally settled on the west coast. Once her family landed in Oregon, Bonney knew it was where she wanted to stay. Of all the places Patty has lived and visited, there's no place she'd rather be than in Oregon. "I love this place," she told us.

That's part of the reason she stays so involved in the OSU Extension Service — she is passionate about improving her community and believes Extension is the place for her to do that. "I am amazed by what everyone at Extension does," Bonney said. "I come home from the RECAN meetings and my whole world has expanded."

In 1982, when Patty became involved in a Home Extension study group which eventually led her to be invited to attend county council meetings and years later wound up as a Home Extension alum. She has been involved with OSU Extension ever since. In legislative budget years she has been asked to testify before the Ways and Means Committee in Salem on behalf of Extension. "It's a group of people I love," she said. "They're always doing things for other people."

While she doesn't travel as much anymore, Patty continues to be actively involved with Extension, her church, two knitting groups, a knitting guild, her local Grange hall where she regularly square dances, and her large family. Her husband passed away in 1976, but their five children, two grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren keep her busy. "Sometimes we'll have all 19 of us together and everyone has a good time," said Bonney, smiling. "It's a delight."

Another great passion is reading. She enjoys everything from her current book — Ursula Leguin's essay collection *No Time to Spare* — to Joanne Fluke's cozy mysteries featuring a heroine who owns a cookie shop. Patty knits on average one scarf a week for the Northwest Pilot Project, an organization that helps seniors find stable housing and provides them with supplies for their new homes. She caught the knitting bug in 1975 when she completed a sweater for her husband. "He was so thrilled with it, I kept it up," she said. Sometimes even fellow RECAN friends will be gifted with knitted treasures. "They are people anyone would enjoy being with."