



PrimeTimes

Volume 17, Number 4

NEA-Retired-Oregon

April 2005

Retired vote 'No' on OEA Bylaws proposal

At the Annual Meeting on March 7 in Salem members of NEA-Retired-Oregon voted to oppose a proposed Oregon Education Association Bylaws change.

Bylaws Proposal C, if passed by OEA Representative Assembly, would restrict the size of future NEA-R-OR delegations to the annual RA. The proposed Bylaw would restrict the number of NEA-R-OR delegates that are allocated by using the present ratio of one delegate for each 40 members. This is the same formula that is used to determine for local association's representation.

The proposed change would cap the use of that ratio to the first 2000 members—at the present time the Retired membership is 1,991. After 2000 members, one additional NEA-R-OR delegate would be added for each 200 members. Presently, NEA-R-OR has the fourth largest delegation at RA.

Speakers opposing the Bylaws change said at the meeting that it was not needed at this time, that if passed it could impact other Association groups in the future—such as large locals—and the concern that has been expressed about the Retired taking over OEA should be laid to rest as that was not our interest.

The proposed Bylaws was submitted by the Strategic Assessment Task Force, who stated, "It was advisable to balance active members' representation with retirees."

The Annual Meeting also supported a motion that directed the NEA-R-OR Executive Committee to develop a position paper that explained NEA-R-OR's and to have it ready for the Mini RAs.

OEA RA slated

Fifty NEA-Retired-Oregon delegates will be attending Oregon Education Association's annual Representative Assembly on April 22-23 at DoubleTree Jantzen Beach Hotel, Portland.

Prime issues at the RA will be:

- election of three top offices of OEA—president, vice president and NEA

Director, as OEA President Kris Kain and Vice President Larry Wolf are term limited.

Candidates running for president for a two-year term are Eugene Education Association President Paul Duchin and OEA Vice President Larry Wolf.

For vice president, for a two-year term are Region I Vice President Tony Crawford, Region III Vice President Gail Rasmussen and Beaverton Education Association President Trisha Parks.

NEA Director Elizabeth Nahl and OEA Director Debbie Wiskow are running for NEA director for a three-year term.

- Consideration of several Bylaws, Policies, Resolutions, reports—one dealing with unity with the American Federation of Teachers—and new business items.
- Awarding of numerous awards honoring member's and local association's achievements.

Delegates representing NEA-R-OR are: Greg Abbott, Bruce Adams, Paul Boehner, Doug Bolton, Doris Bowman, June Buck, Deanna Conner, Barbara Davidson, Shirley Gernhart, Andrew Gottesman, Glenn Harrison, Steve Hillis, Barbara Hodgson, Alan Holland, Gloria Holland-Smith, Phyllis Hulse, Ray Johnson, Kristi Johnson-James, Anne Jones, Bob Jones and Carole Kauffman.

More delegates are: Nancy Lewis, Walt Marchel, Ed McKinney, Judy McKinney, Bette Nelson, Clarence Nelson, Gilda Phay, Richard Phay, Liz Reanier, Doris Robertson, Jay Russo, Paul Schutz, Carol Swehla, Carolyn Vandiver, Kathryn Warrior, Barbara Whitaker, Jerry Wilkins, Stephanie Winsor, Ardeth Woods, Paul Zastrow and Carole Zimmerle.

Detailed information about RA issues and candidates was in the March issue of OEA Today. Be sure to contact the delegates with any concerns.

Your NEA-Retired-Oregon Ballot is due with a postmark of April 5!

From the president

By President Paul Zastrow

NEA-Retired-Oregon members are a real varied lot, however, one can not say that we are truly "retired" as a group. Instead, I would term our retirement from either teaching or some other educational position as a new opportunity to achieve significant changes in the life of our communities and our fellow citizens.

In my "other life" this year, I have had the honor of being the District Governor for Lions Clubs International for District 36-G, covering most of eastern Oregon. In that capacity, not only do I visit each of the 41 clubs in the district, I have had the pleasure of assisting in bringing in a Lions Quest training to the Jefferson County School District.

This program is a comprehensive one that truly addresses the issues of not only drug awareness and abuse, but also gives students and staff a positive curriculum enabling better coping skills. I have honored many Lion members in the District for their help in making their communities a better place to live.

Many of our Retired members volunteer in their communities with their churches, their schools as a SMART reader, or with a service club such as the Lions. I applaud each one who gives of his/her time willingly. Not only have I given service for Lions—remember they are the ones who collect eyeglasses, hearing aides, etc.—they also contribute mightily to the eradication of blindness worldwide.

I dedicated the first 10 years of my retirement life back to my community in various ways. Serving on

boards from a local museum to the county 9-1-1 has kept me in touch with the greater Hood River area and my hope is that will it continue for a long time.

I also remain active with the volunteer fire and emergency medical services and serve on the Region 9 ESD Board as well as in many other capacities.

Retirees are an active and productive group, making their communities better places to live, all the while living the motto of true service to their fellow humans. Getting a hug from a child who has been helped with ocular implants, a thank you letter from a diabetic who received his first glucometer or knowing that many people worldwide are helped by those who give their money, time and talents willingly is rewarding.

I thank each of you who volunteer to help others!

The editor says

By Editor Ray Johnson

This edition of our newsletter marks the christening of its new name—PrimeTimes. I hope that the title accurately reflects the mission of this newsletter and who we are.

Accolades go to Sherie Vandergaw of Dallas for suggesting the title, which was chosen by the Public Relations committee from several proposals.

For those who like statistics, 550 NEA-Retired—Oregon members are receiving PrimeTimes electronically and 1,455 by regular mail.



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PRIMETIMES

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2004-05 CALENDAR

2005

April 1	Newsletter published
April 1-3	NEA-Retired Western Regional, Seattle
April 22-23	OEA RA, Portland
May 16	Retired Board, Eugene
June 1	Newsletter published
June 27-29	NEA-Retired Annual Meeting, Los Angeles
July 1-6	NEA RA, Los Angeles
July 18	Retired Board, Eugene

SS reform going down

You must keep those cards and letters (and phone calling and emailing) going as our voices are being heard. President George W. Bush's plan to privatize Social Security seems to be going nowhere, as even many Republicans are taking cover.

One of U.S Rep. Earl Blumenauer's aides in a meeting with OEA Congressional Advocacy Team members said that there is so much flack about Bush's proposal that the GOP is holding back right now and are not willing to promote it.

The President's recent barnstorming tour across the United States to promote his plan shows how much trouble it is in, even as he and his few supporters keep tailoring the message to find what will resonate with voters.

The only point that seems to resonate is that people want SS to protect them when they retire and they are not prepared to give up those benefits for a risky investment proposal, especially in this day when so many corporations, and now even public retirements accounts, are either being eliminated or drastically reduced.

Another desperate publicity event, even worse than the Swift Boat Veterans for Truth campaign against U.S Sen. John Kerry in the recent presidential election, is the attack on AARP.

The USA Next group, using the same consultants who did the Swift Boat ads, put up an internet ad that says "The Real AARP Agenda." The ad shows the picture of an American soldier with a large, red "X" across his body next to one showing two gay men kissing as they waited in line to obtain their marriage license from Multnomah county.

The obvious question would be, what does this have to do with AARP? Could anyone honestly believe that AARP is not supporting our troops in Iraq but supporting marriage between men? If so, it has not shown up in any of the AARP's ads, literature or statements.

And, of course, this view never will, as the ad is a blatant attempt to appeal to people's emotions, specifically those who oppose same-sex marriage, as an effort to discredit an organization that is strongly opposed to Bush's plan for SS.

Blumenauer said, in a Town Hall meeting specifically devoted to SS near the end of February at Portland State University, that, "We have to deal with economic and political realities (of what Bush proposes). In relation to economics he said that the present day average check to retirees on SS is now \$1,200 and would be \$300 if the private

accounts plan went into effect.

Around 100 people were at the event with nearly half of the audience being college students so SS is not an issue just for retired people.

Still on the economics front, Gary D. House, a former Oregon Department of Education employee analyzed the effects of a private account versus a regular SS account and his figures showed that the ultimate value of one's contributions to a private account is determined, primarily, by the rate of return.

He wrote, "The more one contributes the more one can earn or lose, but winning or losing is not caused by one's contributions, it is caused by matters that are not under one's control, i.e., the unpredictable ups and downs of the investment marketplace.

"Since the rates of return that are realized by actual investors range greatly, millions of workers who would invest in personal accounts ... would receive significantly lower retirement incomes than they would have received without their private account investments, and millions would receive significantly higher retirement incomes."

Thus, there are no guarantees for the benefits from private accounts as the present SS system provides. The question is do you want to gamble or do you want security when you retire?

Another economic reality is who will benefit from private accounts. The Securities Industry Association recently issued a research report that argued the private accounts would not be a financial bonanza for Wall Street.

However, the report calculated that investment firms would collect at least \$39 billion in fees, and perhaps, considerably more from these accounts.

So again, keep up the good work and continue to let our federal legislators know that the President's plan to fix SS is not acceptable. You can send an email by logging onto www.nea.org/lac/index.html and going to the Write Your Legislators section on Social Security.

Metro to start

By Vice President Greg Abbott

Names are needed of members who would be interested in starting a metro NEA-Retired-Oregon local chapter. Chapters already exist in Eugene and Salem. The initial members could help set up the metro organization.

If you are interested, contact me at: 503-620-6430 or gabbott100@earthlink.net.

Retirees gather

Fifty-one NEA-Retired-Oregon members attended the Annual Meeting March 7 in Salem and listened to several presentations and conducted business.

OEA President Kris Kain spoke on the Report of the Unity Committee that will be presented at OEA Representative Assembly in April. The report is the result of a year-long discussion between OEA and AFT representatives on seeking ground for a possible merger between the two organizations.

She said, "If we are going to have the best organization in the world, what would it look like? That idea changed our thinking from the original plan of taking the best of AFT and OEA (for a new organization)."

She highlighted the work of the Committee and said it would ask to be allowed to continue its work on creating a merger with another report at the 2006 RA and a final report in 2007.

She was followed by Chip Terhune, OEA Center for Public Affairs, who gave an update on the state legislature. He said that two weeks ago he would have said that not much was happening but now more is going on after two months into the session.

He said, "(There was) good news on the budget front as the revenue income was double what was projected (at \$202 million) and the state Supreme ruled for the state legislature in its keeping part of the kicker refund (in 2003)."

He said that he was surprised by the House and Senate agreeing on the size of the revenue pie for spending as it was still \$200 million more than was expected. He said, "No one knows for sure what it means. More taxes? More savings?"

He added that is the first time in a decade that there has been a proeducation Senate. He also talked about the \$9 billion in tax breaks that are on the books that reduce taxes for individuals.

He came back later to announce that the group was the first to hear that the Supreme Court ruling would be out the next day on the PERS lawsuits and he expected good news.

Becky Smith, CASA State Coordinator, spoke on the need for volunteers to advocate for children who suffer from abuse and neglect. She explained the Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) program and said that a lot of retired teachers were involved.

She said that there were 263 volunteers in 2004 who served 4,000 children but that 9 – 10,000 children need help. She said "CASA is a catalyst for

children in the welfare system and is an addition to, not a solution to the overwhelmed system."

CASA is set up on a county basis with volunteers expected to commit to one-to-two years after 30 - 40 hours of training. If you are interested in the program, contact her at: 503-373-1570, ext. 257, or becky.smith@state.or.us.

Right before lunch, the OEA Foundation auction raised \$320 with an additional \$67 donated.

After lunch, Dick Hohnbaum of the Lewis & Clark Trail Heritage Foundation, talked about the Corps of Discovery. He said, "The trip began in the mind of President Jefferson, who never went west of the Blue Ridge Mountains." He continued that the Corps was made up of tough, uncouth and nearly all illiterate but skilled woodsmen.

He said the Foundation was formed due to parts of the Trail being lost and there are now 37 chapters in 30 states with the annual meeting to be in Portland in August.

He recommended these books for reading: "Undaunted Courage" by Stephen Ambrose, "Sacagawea Speaks" by Joyce Hunsaker, "The Journals of Lewis & Clark" (with spelling corrected) by Anthony Brandt and "The Journals of Patrick Gass" (one of the Corps members) by Carol MacGregor."

For information on the Foundation go to: www.lewisandclark.org.

The final speaker was Bob Cornell, retired teacher with Oregon PERS Retirees, Inc. (OPRI), who said the purpose of OPRI was to protect the retirement of public employees. He said it was started in 1991 when the state legislature first made an attack on PERS but the new groups was successful in beating it back.

For membership, go to: www.opri.org.

The day concluded with a business meeting and door prizes.

Did you read?

By Doris Robertson, Read Across America Chair

Several activities were sponsored by NEA's Read Across America for Dr. Seuss' Birthday on March 2. NEA-Retired-Oregon members shared books at many schools, a Food Share site and Doernbecher Hospital and gave out stickers, tattoos, bookmarks, buttons and posters.

Please e-mail at dorisa@canby.com with any activities and/or pictures that you have.

Capital sees rally

By June Buck, OEA Legislative Advisory Council

On President's Day, February 21, more than 150 Jackson and Josephine County residents traveled to Salem to lobby for adequate K-12 funding.

The day was organized by Stand for Children and we stood shoulder to shoulder with 3,000 others from around the state and chanted "No More Cuts to Schools." After the rally, 75 of us met with area legislators to let them know how deep the cuts to schools will be should the governor's \$5.0 billion proposal stand.

Did we make a difference? You bet! On February 28, the Senate Democrats announced that they would stand behind the state's Legislative Fiscal Office's "hold-harmless" number of \$5.4 billion.

We gave our friends in the legislature the courage they needed to support schools. We encouraged them to do what is right for children and they rose to the challenge.

What next? We need to stay in touch with our legislators and make sure they know we expect them to fund schools. They need us to keep the pressure on—write letters, call and email to tell your state senator and representative that we expect them to listen to their constituents who demand adequate funding for public schools.

Also, you should consider becoming a member of Stand for Children. Its website is: www.stand.org. Find out what we're doing locally to make a difference for kids!

Pauliticks continue

By PIE Director Paul Zastrow

NEA-Retired-Oregon was one of very few groups in OEA that had an increase in the number of participants as well as monetary donations to OEA-PIE. Thanks for your generosity, but we can not rest on our laurels or increased giving.

OEA-PIE still needs added dollars for the coming years to ensure that those candidates who "measure up" are not only assisted but actually have a greater chance of being elected.

Remember that a donation of up to \$50 per person or \$100 per couple can be used as a TAX CREDIT on Oregon's taxes, meaning that you receive the full amount back as a decrease in your tax obligation or an increase in your refund.

As the Oregon Legislature continues to work towards adjournment—some time in the possibly distant future—it appears that acrimony has yet to negatively impact the process. Yet, all is not well in

the halls of Salem.

The money to adequately fund schools seems not to be there, nor is there the courage to dramatically overhaul our tax system to make the changes necessary to make schools whole or to guarantee appropriate medical coverage for all.

By the time that you read this, the Supreme Court decision regarding PERS changes will have been issued. If it is favorable, there definitely will be a financial impact that the Legislature must address.

On the political front, people are already positioning themselves for a run at either their current office, to challenge an incumbent or even to make a run for a different, and as they see it, greater office.

Our duty is to monitor the political process, to ensure education and retirees not only have a voice, but also actually are heard and respected. My challenge to you is to become involved at the local level as a precinct person, going to local party meetings or assisting in the election of good candidates and then on to lobby for good in the halls of Salem and the US Congress!

NEA grant awarded

By Vice President Greg Abbott

NEA-Retired-Oregon received a NEA grant for the third year in a row. For \$1,500, the money will be used by the Pre-Retirement Committee to further its program.

So far we have purchased labeled pens and pads to give to each participant in our Pre-Retirement Workshops.

Last year's grant was used to train our members as presenters for the workshops that explain the benefits of retirement.

Drug site goes online

The National Education Association and several other union and consumer advocacy groups recently partnered with Consumers Union, publisher of Consumer Reports magazine, to help launch a new prescription drug website at: www.CRBESTBUYDRUGS.org.

The website compares a variety of prescription drugs based on price, effectiveness and safety in order to help consumers and their doctors identify the most effective and affordable medicines to treat various medical conditions.

The site currently contains reports on three drug categories, and will eventually contain information about 20 drug categories.

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Volunteers needed

By Rebekah Fuss, OHS

The Oregon Historical Society will be hosting Lewis & Clark: The National Bicentennial Exhibition from November 11, 2005 to March 11, 2006. Since OHS will be the only venue on the West Coast hosting the exhibit, there will be many visitors and thus a need for many volunteers.

As a volunteer, you will have the opportunity to learn more about Lewis & Clark and receive discounted tickets to the exhibit! Several different volunteer positions will be available: Docents, Assistants in Visitor Services and the Museum Store and Special Event Volunteers.

If you are interested in being a part of this unique event, please contact me at: 503-306-5226 or rebekahf@ohs.org.

Retirees help Salem

By Alan Holland

The Salem Education Association successfully settled a new contract by a ratifying vote March 2 with assistance from volunteers from Salem Area Chapter of Retired Educators serving as elections

supervisor/ observers and counting and verifying the vote.

SAC-RE also had 10 members reading to students in Liberty Elementary School for NEA's Read Across America Day on March 2.

Future events for SAC-RE are:

- 2nd Tuesdays, Breakfast, 8:30 a.m., Sybl's Omelettes, State Street.
- April 7, Pre-Retirement Workshop on personal issues (not finances), 4:30-6:30 p.m., OEA Office, Salem. Contact: 503-364-6987 or gloriabhs@msn.com.
- April 26, Dessert, 3-6 p.m., OEA office, Salem.
- May 24, SAC-RE General Meeting, 11 a.m.-3:30 p.m., OEA office, Salem.
- May 28, Winery tour, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. (Looking for vans and drivers.)

Contact me at: 503-371-3920 or alanholland@msn.com for further details.

Thought for the Day

Light travels faster than sound. This is why some people appear bright until you hear them speak.