



OEA PAC selects candidates for 2024

by Marleen Wallingford

OEA PAC contributors attending the OEA PAC Convention on March 8-9 in Eugene heard from all of the candidates who submitted their application to be considered for an endorsement.

Started in 1978, the biannual Convention is one-of-a-kind in the Nation as no other state has its contributors decide their endorsements.

The Delegates seriously considered the candidates' platforms, their past history and viability to determine who would get the endorsement of OEA PAC.

These dollars are contributions by members to our political action committee and are not part of union dues. We use our collective power to select pro-education candidates.

There were three contested races. The one for secretary of state was hotly debated between James Manning and Tobias Reed, with two runoffs needed to decide.

Congressional District 3 had four candidates who all had different strengths and platforms. There was a group of educators who were very concerned about their stance on the war in Gaza.

Eddy Morales with his background of organizing and his compelling immigrant story appealed to this union-loving organization. The other candidates were Maxine Dexter, Susheela Jayapal and Michael Jonas. There was some

conversation about no endorsement, since all of the candidates were supporters of public education and all showed that they would be great additions to our congressional delegation.

In CD 5, the choices were between Jaynelle Bynam and Jamie McCloud-Skinner. State Representative Bynam had endorsements from Oregon governors Barbara Roberts, Kate Brown and Tina Kotek, but eod-Skinner is a great campaigner and has always championed education.

ENDORSEMENTS MADE

Attorney General

Dan Rayfield

Secretary of State

Tobias Read

Treasurer

Elizabeth Steiner

US Representative District 1

Suzanne Bonamici

US Representative District 3

Eddy Morales

US Representative District 4

Val Hoyle

US Representative District 5

Jamie McLeod-Skinner

US Representative District 6

Andrea Salinas

Portland will be hosting NEA RA in the summer of 2025

by Ray Johnson

It will be an exciting time for Portland in the Summer of 2025 as NEA recently announced that its annual Representative Assembly, and the NEA-Retired Annual Meeting, would be held at the Oregon Convention Center.

Planning has started already as OEA President Reed Scott-Schwalbach appointed former OEA President Hanna Vaandering as chair of the Planning Committee, and I also was appointed to the Committee.

Following my reports to the OEA-Retired Board,

other directors have told me of their involvement in the last RA that was held in Portland in 1973—Pam Wojcik, as a delegate, and Ardeth Woods, as a volunteer, as I was, too.

Other directors have offered to be possible volunteers at the event as 200 volunteers per day are needed. Please let me know at if you are interested at rayugene@gmail.com, and I will add you to my list. Approximate dates are June 30-July 5.

Other RAs held in Portland were in 1917, 1936 and 1956.

Random remarks



by President Eileen Wende

I just returned from the 2024 NEA Summit and NEA-Retired Conference in Chicago. OEA-Retired Treasurer, Bobbi Yambasu, Cherene Mills, membership chair and Lesly

Munoz, OEA-Retired's staff liaison, completed our delegation to the conference.

It was a privilege to represent OEA retirees at this national gathering of educators and supporters of public education.

At the Summit, retired and active NEA members listened to keynote speakers and attended breakout sessions which addressed the NEA's Leadership competencies that are designed to develop activist leaders to build thriving associations and to lead in their profession.

I found participating in the Summit with active educators a powerful and engaging experience.

Teaching today has many challenges and yet many of the issues surrounding education today have much in common with our teaching experiences.

Inadequate funding, special education, class size, and respect for educators were a few of the issues that sounded all too familiar. In addition, active educators are working in a climate that is having to deal with disruptive student behavior, groups working to undermine public education, attacks on their curriculum and their ability to create a safe environment for all students, regardless of their race, gender identification or ability.

A highlight of the Summit was Dr. John H. Jackson, president and CEO of the Schott Foundation for Public Education. He is a fierce advocate for public education and for all students, regardless of their race or gender, to have a fair and substantive opportunity to learn.

He reminded educators about how important they are to their students, their families, their communities and to this nation. He understands that educators have heavy work loads and may not stop to think about how valued they are in the current political climate. He energized the educators in the room and made sure they understood how valued they are.

This Conference was organized around the current political climate that is impacting our students, educators and the country. There were some nuts and bolts training sessions for leaders and liaison staff, as well as many engaging

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CALENDAR

2024

April 1	PrimeTimes published
April 19	OEA-Retired Social Justice Book Club (virtual)
April 19-20	OEA Representative Assembly, Holiday Inn-Columbia Riverfront
May 20	OEA-Retired Board Meeting, Salem
May 31	OEA-Retired Social Justice Book Club (virtua
June 1	PrimeTimes published
June 30 –	NEA-Retired Annual Assembly
July 1,	Philadelphia
July 12	OEA-Retired Social Justice Book Club (virtual)

Remarks

Continued from Page 2.
breakout sessions. The theme was “EDUCATION. DEMOCRACY. FREEDOM. OUR RIGHT! OUR RESPONSIBILITY!”

I attended a session on the well-organized, funded and persistent assaults on public education from entities bent on destroying public education. These organizations use their wealth and power to sway public influence, promote right-to-work laws and private schools, weaken the middle class, elect politicians and, most selfishly, preserve the one percent of the wealthiest in this country.

A NEA legislative priority is to repeal GPO (Government Pension Offset) and WEP (Windfall Elimination Provision). After many years, there is some hope that the repeal of GOP/WEP may happen soon.

Currently more than 2.5 million public employees, including many educators, have reduced retirement benefits or, in some cases, lose them entirely, due to these two laws.

If successful, educators in the impacted states will have the same-earned Social Security benefits that we have, such as being paid their full earned SSI benefit and having the right to spousal benefits.

NEA President Becky Pringle hammered home the importance of this coming November’s election. The threat to democracy in this election is unprecedented and REAL! Retired Educators must join active educators to organize and vote for Joe Biden and Pamela Harris.

Educators have never had such a strong supporter and believer of public education in the White House. There is more at stake in this 2024 election than ever before in the history of this country.

The importance of understanding and advocating for our LGBTQ+ students and educators in today’s political climate was presented by Cat Clarke from Illinois. Besides helping us to understand the current terminology used to identify members of the LGBTQ+ community, Cat also told us of the major issues affecting this community.

She told us that the medical community has noticed an increased number of trans youth suffering from dehydration. It seems that rather than having to use public restrooms, they have stopped drinking water and other hydrating drinks. In addition, Cat brought books that could be a resource for children and adults.

In closing let me add that I believe that retirees have a role in promoting, protecting and strengthening education. We should tell our stories so that people who aren’t educators will become strong proponents of public education.

Advocacy with Congress

by **Maureen Barnhart**

Oregon’s NEA Directors met with all eight members of the Oregon Congressional delegation to discuss these issues:

- Education Support

Professionals Bill of Rights

- End Unfair Government Pension Offset (GPO) and Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) Penalties and Strengthen Social Security for all. This is one that bears close monitoring. It seems that the legislation desired by NEA/OEA may finally pass this year.

- Child Tax Credit improvement
 - Secure Rural Schools extension
 - End the chronic underfunding of public schools that educate 9 out of 10 students. Congress should increase funding for:
 1. Title I programs for schools with high poverty rates among students
 2. Title II grants used to recruit and retain educators, and help address shortages that are at crisis levels—especially in certain subjects and geographic areas
 3. IDEA state grants for special education and related services for students with disabilities
 4. Community schools that provide integrated academic, health, nutrition, and other services
 5. Perkins grants to support high quality career and technical education (CTE) programs
 6. Pell grants to help make higher education affordable for low-income students
 7. Mental health care services for students and educators to address crises created by the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath
 8. Minority-serving institutions, including Historically Black Colleges and Universities,
- Continued on Page 5.*

Nominations are closed

by Mavis Randklev

By the time you receive this PrimeTimes, nominations will be closed for the 2024-25 OEA-Retired elections. If still interested, but you missed the deadline, you can start a write-in campaign.

Please keep the following dates in mind:

- April 11, online voting will open and will close May 2.
- April 11, paper ballots for those without email addresses will be mailed but only ballots postmarked by May 2 will count.

Exercise your right and vote.

Foundation founder remembered



Lynne Siegel
June 2, 1945 - Jan. 24, 2024

by Anne Jones

Lynne Siegel was our OEA legal council for several years, 1988 - 1997. She finished her career as a private consultant for family and private foundations.

Memories of her and shared by some OEA Retired members.

Anne Jones: I remember

Lynne specifically for bringing the idea of an OEA Foundation to the Executive Committee in the early 1990s.

The Executive Committee at the time included: Bruce Adams, president, Anne Jones, Region I vice president; Carolyn VanDiver, Region II vice president; and Stephen Hillis, Region III vice president, Barbara Gornick and LeVonne Lobert-Edmo.

Once Siegel explained how it might work, we all were in favor of it and the OEA RA agreed. The Foundation was born in 1993.

Stephen Hillis: My memories of Lynne are strictly dealing with OEA Executive Committee. I remember her as being highly involved, always willing to discuss and add to our discussions.

She was the driving force behind the creation of the Foundation and worked very hard to convince the Board and Bob Crumpton, executive director, that it was a doable project and well worth our efforts. She was friendly and outgoing and a real pleasure to know and work with in all of our interactions.

Eileen Wende: The Portland Symphonic Choir and hearing Lynne sing.

Barbara Jackson Gornick: I do remember her fondly and loved sitting in her office just chatting or discussing legal topics. I liked everything about her and thought we were lucky to have her.

We Remember

Dennis Faber
October 21, 2021
Eugene

Karen Kay Akin
March 13, 1938-August 9,
2022
Bellview Colorado

Gloria Jean Craig
May 30, 1944 - March 12,
2023
Portland

Gloria taught in Portland Public Schools at Rose City Park and Hosford for more than 30 years.



Carroll Noel
July 3, 1949-January 24, 2024
Eugene

A beloved educator, Carroll Noel has passed on.

Carroll touched so many. He taught K-1-2 for over 30 years at Lorane Elementary School

He embodied the spirit of the NEA GLBT Caucus, as he was one of the founders, and did so much to raise awareness of their issues. He also volunteered with Shanti providing emotional support to persons living with AIDs. So many were inspired and encouraged by his kindness!

Noel won many awards one of which was the OEA Ed Elliott Human Rights Award as a retiree in 2004.



Region I

by Ray Johnson

If you are a pre-retired member in Region I—the Portland Metro area—be watching your email box for an invite to a social event with other retired and soon-to-be retired colleagues. The details are still in the planning stages.

In the meantime, we continue with a luncheon at 11:30 a.m., April 25 at Whelan’s Irish Pub, SE Portland, but then have our annual Happy Hour at 3:00 p.m. at Hip Chicks Do Wine, SE Portland.

Please feel free to bring guests to our events, regardless of where they live. RSVPs are necessary, or questions, to Ray Johnson at 503-887-0467 or rayugene@gmail.com.



by Marleen Wallingford

General Meeting

9:30 a.m., April 11
PAT Office, 345 NE 8th Ave.
Potluck or \$10

Breakfast

9:30, May 9
John Street Cafe
8338 N. Lombard

Leach Botanical Gardens

May TBD

Region II

First Tuesday Breakfast
10 a.m.-Noon, April 2, May 7,
June 4
Sybil’s Omelettes
2373 State
St., Salem.
Questions and RSVP for all

above to: Paul Schutz,
503-370-9208 or
paul.g.schutz@gmail.com.

Region III

Southern Oregon Coffee & Visit
May 15 and July 17
Fred Meyer

South Medford Starbucks
1301 Center Dr.
Details: Coffee and a sweet
provided by OEA-Retired.
RSVP: Judy Richards at
jarich7138@gmail.com

Advocacy

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Hispanic-Serving Institutions,
and Tribal Colleges and
Universities

- Support the Background Check Expansion Act (S. 494)/Bipartisan Background Checks Act of 2023 (H.R. 715) and the Assault Weapons Ban (S. 25/H.R. 698) and gun violence prevention in general.
- Support the Equality Act (S. 5/H.R. 15). According to govtrak.us this has no chance of passing.

The OEA Directors state that they continue to enjoy generally positive relationships with both members and staff. Rep. Cliff Bentz (R-2nd) while not hostile, continues to present challenges in terms of forming positive connections, though his education staffer, Cristian Figueredo, has been unfailingly pleasant to work with.

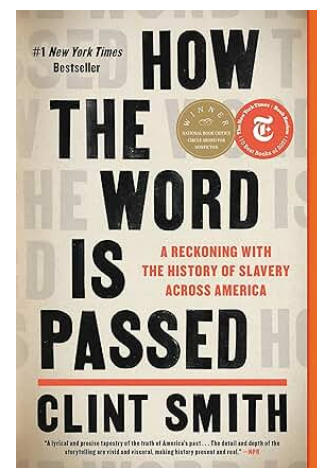
Rep. Chavez-DeRemer’s (R-5th) office has been quite positive. OEA Director Chris Early has encouraged her staffer, Francisco Flores-Pourrat, to participate in the coming OEA PAC Convention process.

Following the threatened-and-averted shutdowns of the Federal Government, letters of thanks were signed by the Directors and CAT Chair Deb Barnes and delivered in late November 2023 to Rep. Bentz and Rep. Chavez-DeRemer for consistently voting to keep the government open.

Rep. Bentz, in particular, made statements that barely concealed his exasperation with members of the House’s Freedom Caucus.

Following the OEA Board of Directors’ adoption of the Labor Movement resolution that calls for an immediate ceasefire and the release of hostages in Gaza, the resolution was transmitted to the entire Oregon Congressional Delegation.

Time to read



by Bobbi Yambasu

Readers! On March 8, we had our discussion of “This is My America” by Kim Johnson. As always we had a great discussion. We hope you will join us for our next book, *Continued on Page 6.*

Time to travel again

by Ray Johnson

For nearly 15 years, OEA-Retired has been sponsoring trips through Collette, with the first one being Spectacular South Africa, which eight of our members with family or friends enjoyed.

Now that we are into 2024, the Travel Committee has proposed the following tours for the 2025-26 season: Alaska Discovery Land & Cruise (February), Discover Switzerland, Austria and Bavaria (September), Christmas on the Danube (December, which will sell out so immediate reservations are necessary), and Southern Charms (late February 2025).

If you take one of our tours, the benefits are terrific as Collette guarantees:

- flying out of Portland as part of the cost, whereas with most other tours it is necessary to book your own flight to a larger city to embark.
- booking hotels of 4-star quality or more, so no research is needed to find your own.
- arranging to arrive earlier, or stay later, than the tour dates at no additional cost.
- handling your luggage from hotel to hotel so minimal amount of effort for you.
- always free time during the tour to do your own exploring.
- and, providing knowledgeable and personable tour guides to enlighten your experience.

Furthermore, our association with Collette allows you to take any of their tours, aside from the ones we sponsor, using our code.

Members of the Travel Committee are: Chair Nancy Lewis, Darlene Cook, Irene Ikada, Ray Johnson, Carolyn Ramey, Bob Rice, Sandi Rosenfeld and Viki Mulick.

Also, be sure to mark you calendar for the Zoom meeting on June 11 to learn about our Patagonia: Edge of the World tour in February.

Read and discuss

Continued from Page 5.

“How the Word Is Passed” by Clint Smith. The Equity and Social Justice Book Club will be discussing that book April 19 via Zoom. This is American history investigated via a tour of monuments and landmarks. Smith is a staff writer at The Atlantic and the author of the poetry collection “Counting Descent.”

If you would like to join us, and have not yet signed up to get the link, email Bobbi Yambasu
Continued in next column.

OEA-Retired Travel-2024

National Parks of America

September 14-25, 2024. 12 days with 16 meals.

Cost: \$5,949.

Deposit of \$698 due March 14, 2024.

Final payment due July 16, 2024.

For more information or reservations, go to
<https://gateway.gocollette.com/link/1154565>

Spain's Classics & Portugal

October 12-26, 2024. 15 days with 20 meals.

Cost: \$5,699.

Deposit of \$698 due April 13, 2024.

Final payment: August 13, 2024.

For more information or reservations, go to
<https://gateway.gocollette.com/link/1154566>

Patagonia: Edge of the World

February 13-26, 2025. 14 days with 24 meals.

Cost: \$10,299.

Deposit of \$898 due July 7, 2024.

Final payment: October 16, 2024.

For more information or reservations, go to
<https://gateway.gocollette.com/link/1154552>

For information on National Parks, or Patagonia contact Sandi Rosenfeld at 503-880-9953, or sanrosenfeld@gmail.com

For Spain & Portugal, contact Nancy Lewis at 503-352-4453, or nancyjolewis@gmail.com

(bobbij4967@gmail.com) and she will send it you.
Good reading to you!

Equity and Social Justice Committee Book Selections

How the Word is Passed

by Clint Smith

April 19

A Lesbiana's Guide to Catholic School

by Sonora Reyes

May 31

The Vanishing Half

by Brit Bennett

July 12

Become a member

by Cherene Mills

The OEA-Retired Membership Committee has been busy generating ideas for different ways to increase both retired and pre-retired membership. We will be reaching out to engage members in activities that connect retired members with active members. We are also asking you to share your story as to why you are a member of OEA-Retired or pre-retired. Watch for activities near you in the future.

Reminder, if you are a pre-retired member who has recently retired, please contact Chris Jarrett at OEA (chris.jarrett@oregoned.org) to change your membership from pre-retired to retired.

Retiree keeps busy

by Ray Johnson

Sitting next to a recently new OEA-Retired member at the Region I lunch two months ago, our conversation confirmed why we retire—to basically do what we want, specifically in the arena of volunteering and traveling.

Martha Gross is especially doing that. She said, “I really loved teaching, but I had no trouble transitioning into retirement—it’s a blast!!!”

In retirement, her life covers many facets as she continues as a member of the Oregon Teacher Standards and Practices Commission. That alone is interesting, but one of her most fascinating activities is being a ‘decoy’ for the

Transportation Security Administration at the Portland Airport, where she attempts to smuggle forbidden items through security. Her identity is not revealed until she is taken into a room for interrogation.

Other volunteer activities for Gross include working with the Urban Tour Group, Multnomah County Amateur Radio Emergency Service, Neighborhood Emergency Team—she said she started the Alameda Team in the 1990’s while she was a member and chair of the Alameda Community Association—and initiated and coordinated several neighborhood tree plantings, including one encompassing four neighborhoods and two watersheds.

Also since retiring, she and her husband have embarked on several long-term road trips, with “lots” of stops along the way that have included eight weeks across northern United States, into Eastern Canada and New England, and then down the Blue Ridge Parkway and ending in Memphis.

A second trip was for seven weeks in the deserts of Arizona and California.

The most recent trip was for three weeks as they flew, but then used cars and public transportation. The main reason for the trip was union-related as they attended the dedication of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire Memorial that commemorated the 1911 fire in NYC, with side trips to Connecticut and Delaware.

Gross had many prior jobs but only began teaching at the age of 48 with the Portland Public Schools and completed 22 years before retiring in June of 2022. She also was a member and past chair of the

Lewis & Clark College Educational Consortium. Along the way she received the Spirit of Portland Award in the 1990’s and a few other awards from the City of Portland and other entities

Gross grew up in New York City and graduated from high school and college there before attending graduate school at both Oregon State University and Lewis & Clark College.

She said she is becoming involved in OEA-Retired because she wanted to stay active in the union, socialize and continue to give back to a profession “I loved.” Gross said that she still has more to do with, “Lots more traveling and finding ways to give back to my community.”



Martha Gross enjoying exploring with her husband.

“It’s paradoxical that the idea of living a long life appeals to everyone, but the idea of getting old doesn’t appeal to anyone.”

Andy Rooney



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