Every child needs a book

Despite these uncertain times of online school, canceled events, and social distancing, your Literacy Committee—Matt Falby, Sandy Grzeskowiak, Kathryn Warrior, and me, as chair—have been very busy.

Each of us launched campaigns for books on our social media sites and received 858 books and $100 in donations. Four-hundred-ninety-three of those books came from my former school, Mooberry Elementary in Hillsboro. In addition, we got a huge amount of Houghton Mifflin Leveled Readers from Mooberry (they are getting a new reading adoption), which I have been distributing to Summer Lunch sites in Forest Grove, Cornelius, Newberg and McMinnville so far, as well as several Little Free Libraries on my daily walks (over 600 books and counting).

We also creatively spent the $500 remaining in our OEA-Retired budget for new books from Costco, Amazon.com, Scholastic.com, and Matt’s favorite book store in Salem. Now my garage is full of great books.

In January we discovered we had placed books into the hands and homes of Oregon children in all but eight of our 36 counties. That number is now down to 4—Gilliam, Malheur, Sherman, Continued on Page 6.

Changes to PERS is in court again

by Marleen Wallingford

PERS benefits have been a never-ending source of contention among lawmakers and often used as a barrier to passing funds for education or social services.

After decades of defunding education, we were finally able to turn the tide with the passage of the Student Success Act in 2019, but at the cost of some of our longtime allies supporting and passing SB 1049 that May.

This latter legislation was intended to address the increase of the PERS contribution rate that is covered by employers. It is estimated that approximately 25-30 percent of an employer’s budget is needed to fund the PERS liability, which is the difference between promised benefits and current assets. This would affect active members and members who have not yet retired.

Thus, six percent of members’ contributions were redirected to a new account which would fund each member’s benefits for Tier One and Two members. This redirected account would be between 0.75-2.5 percent of salary and applies to members earning more than $2,500 a month, and would cut future pension benefits between one and 2.5 percent.

Ironically, most of the system’s liability is owed to current retirees who are not affected by this legislation. It is being challenged in the Oregon Supreme Court by public employees. Oral arguments were presented in June 2020. The Supreme Court has no timeline for its decision.
President’s message

by President Bobbi Yambasu

The most recent killings of Black Americans have led to protests, creation of police accountability laws and much questioning. For many of us who grew up in the 1960s and 1970s, the shouts and cries for racial justice have caused us much angst. Many of us had committed ourselves years ago to racial equality and had been lulled by what we saw as better conditions for our Black citizens. Unfortunately, the reality is starkly different from what we thought.

As a Civil Rights Movement participant, I have had to ‘own’ that we did not do enough then, and we are not doing enough now. It is sobering to realize that we as individuals and as a nation have not progressed as far as we thought we had. Most of us have been through myriad trainings on race. Unfortunately, few, if any, led us to confront our learned bias. And, for those of us who are White, many of us have yet to come to terms with our inherent White Privilege and how that affects our lives, our thinking, our education, our economics and our relationship with the law. Until we take ownership of our White Privilege, we cannot adequately address the systemic racism of our society, nor move to rectify the situations it creates and upholds.

The vast majority of Oregon educators and education retirees is White. Confronting the benefits of our whiteness is often difficult. As my students said, “But I didn’t ask for White Privilege.” While that is true, we cannot help from benefiting from it.

So, what can we do? As the parent of biracial children, I know what happens to Black children. Yes, I had to fear for them at times. So, what have I learned on my 40+ year journey?

One, I have learned that the journey never stops. I must question my motives, my decisions and my actions regularly, testing them for racial bias. It can be tiring. It never lets up.

I have learned that there is a big difference between believing in nondiscrimination and being an antiracist. Being an antiracist means doing Continued on Page 3.
Message

Continued from Page 2

doing that constant questioning.

It means owning up to the biases we all have and then doing our utmost to change our behaviors. It means misunderstandings, tears, anger, frustration. It also means that if we all try to become active antiracists, maybe the future will actually live up to the promise of equality and racial justice for all.

A few resources to help us all on the journey to becoming a true ally:
- “The New Jim Crow” by Michelle Alexander
- “How to Be an Antiracist” by Ibram X. Kendi
- “White Fragility: Why It’s So Hard for White People to Talk about Racism” by Robin DiAngelo.

Oregon Congressmen respond

by Maureen Barnhart

Clearly the bigger issue of these painful times: civil rights, racial profiling and brutality on the part of law enforcement, are rightly making the headlines along with the pandemic.

The Oregon delegation is involved in negotiating the next relief package, seeking assistance for families, businesses, and states and local governments. Schools and businesses await development of testing, one or more vaccinations, as well as implementation of workplace protections and PPE for essential workers.

I hope that the reader will not feel that these and other significant issues, such as the disparity in impacts on people of color—health and economic—are not being dismissed as we look at some of the other issues in this new life.

There are most definitely efforts being made to address these inequities, and our Oregon delegation is deeply involved in seeking those mitigations.

Drought and COVID-19 make for an especially challenging wildfire season. Reps. DeFazio, Blumenauer, Walden and Bonamici are asking the US Forest Service about preparedness, not only in fire prevention and suppression, but also in addressing the challenges of keeping the firefighters and residents safe from the pandemic.

Bipartisan Retirement Savings Lost and Found Act was re-introduced by Rep. Suzanne Bonamici to modernize systems and protect American’s retirement accounts as they move between jobs.

Looking forward to childcare needs, with so many families keeping children home, there is concern regarding the future of childcare/outside of school care. Every county in Oregon has been designated a “child care desert,” meaning that there are three or more children for every available childcare position.

(Note: If you are interested in more on this PBS Newshour story, go to: https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/many-child-care-facilities-remain-closed-who-will-watch-kids-as-parents-return-to-

work.) Rep. Bonamici is a lead on this.

Share Data that would keep Guns Out of the Wrong Hands was supported by Rep. Greg Walden which would require bi-annual reviews that would have denied guns to those who have created tragedies.

Additionally, Walden secured full funding for PILT, providing support for local governments that contain non-taxable Federal lands (wildlife refuges, e.g.) within their jurisdictions.

Rep. Bonamici was part of a group of U.S. Representatives who had to take Betsy DeVos to task for a lack of oversight that allowed the loan industry to ignore protections in the CARES act and allowed garnishment of wages of students with loans. This had resulted in a lowering of credit scores.

The Administration had asked foreign students to leave the U.S. if they were taking only online classes. The policy would likely affect students from Asian and Pacific Island countries disproportionately

Continued on Page 4.
Fall conference rescheduled

by Vickie Jackson

Hello retired OEA members! The 2020 Fall Conference in Hood River has been cancelled due to the pandemic and is now rescheduled for next September in Hood River. It will feature speakers from around the area to inform us about the fruit production; history of the area; the air museum, lowering your driving insurance by taking a refresher course, and local brewing tours. We want to have our meetings in the newly renovated fire stations.

We do however want your suggestions on workshops for next March’s Annual Assembly held in Salem at OEA headquarters.

What topics would you like to learn about: gardening tips; Legislature news; history about the capital; someone from the education department to tell us about any changes?

Please send your ideas to: Vickie Jackson@dandvjackson@gmail.com or to: Paul Zastrow@pzastrow@gorge.net by December 15, 2020.

Oregon

Continued from Page 3.

but because of resistance from universities and the public, the Administration has backed off from that requirement.

The delegation urges the Senate to take up the American Dream and Promise Act that has passed the House.

Rep. DeFazio supports the Justice in Policing Act that addresses patterns of police brutality and racial injustice, including prohibiting law enforcement at all levels from racial, religious and discriminatory profiling; banning chokeholds, carotid holds, no-knock warrants; mandating the use of dashboard and body cameras; establishment of a national registry to prevent problematic officers from moving between jurisdictions; encouraging state attorneys to develop authority for independent investigations into problematic police departments.

In-person education and safety in our K-12 schools are the subject of debate and concern. We all understand the value of personal interactions among children and young adults, and between students and educators. However in places where there are viral spikes the health of the community must be protected.

For the most part, the Oregon delegation agrees and insists that Congress and the governors provide funding and allow flexible planning that is guided by science.

President Donald Trump is now looking at changing CDC (Center for Disease Control) safety measures rather than acknowledging and addressing the current health dangers.

Support our PACs

by Paul Zastrow

The year 2020 will be historic in many ways—the year of COVID-19, the year we vote Trump out of office, the elimination of Betsy DeVos as Secretary of Education, the year that the Oregon Legislature will no longer have to deal with walk-outs, and the implementation of the Student Success Act in our schools.

Some of this may be wishful thinking, but we can have a positive impact. Your OEA-PAC is working to achieve a position that allows the legislative process to continue without the interruption of walking out by the lesser party. The 2019 Legislature passed so few bills that our elected leaders must be ashamed of the lack of effort to come to agreements on. This has to change.

When our PAC endorses a candidate, the person must measure up to the standards we expect for a pro-education candidate. We can assist in the election of these education favoring candidates by giving support financially to them, and then volunteering our selves to help via phone calling, door knocking, and other means. However, it all takes money!

Oregon is one of a handful of states where the donations for political office is a tax credit, meaning it actually costs nothing to give! The limit is $50 limit per person or $100 per family. The process is easy: a simple check donation written to OEA-PAC will do it. Or, even less painful is a monthly contribution from a credit card or checking account. Only eight percent of us donate now. I give $15 per month to our state political action committee more to NEA, and even donate to individual campaigns!

Please join me in giving. Even a $5 donation is better than nothing. In your August OEA-Retired mailing you will find an OEA-PAC/NEA Fund form. Please consider giving at the “Presidential Level” of $100 for OEA-PAC and $20 to the NEA Fund.
Membership savings
by Terri Domenigoni
Check your mail! Fall mailing was completed on August 10. If you do not receive your Fall membership materials by the end of August please contact Chris Jarrett at the OEA office 503-495-2153, or Jessica McNannay at the Salem office 503-364-6987, and we will make sure you get one.

This year we will be giving away two NEA-Retired Lifetime memberships in a drawing of members who sign up for an OEA-Retired Lifetime membership. Members who have annual memberships and change these memberships to a Lifetime OEA-Retired membership will be eligible along with new members who sign up for an OEA-Retired Lifetime membership.

One drawing will be held in June 2021 for all members who sign up from August through June 1. The other drawing will be held for those active members attending OEA Representative Assembly in April 2021.

You can pay your annual dues online now as well as PAC and Foundation donations. Forms for the OEA Foundation and PAC are included in the mailing and can be mailed to OEA in the return envelope.

This year it is more important than ever to contribute to our Foundation as it has been overwhelmed with requests for many students who need clothing, technology, and much more.

We can’t stress how important this election is this year. Your PAC dollars are needed to help elect candidates that support quality education for all our students. Think about taking on the Presidential challenge of $120 or making a monthly donation of $5 per month. Any amount you can donate is helpful.

Lastly, if you are sending your membership money or donations in by mail, please send separate checks for each one. Annual dues, PAC and The OEA Foundation need separate checks to help keep our accounting straight for tax purposes.

Rulings have become more stringent and the form needs to be attached to your check for each individual area. It will help our accounting department keep the money from being comingled. Thank you for your help in this area.

PrimeTimes has added an In Memoriam box that lists our members who have passed away. It will be a way to honor our members and also let members know about colleagues they know.

If you know of an OEA member who has passed away please send an email to Jeanette Kmetic at clipp58@comcast.net. We hope in the future we will see you at OEA-Retired events.

Have you moved? Changed your email address?
Update your information.
Contact Jessica McNannay at jessica.mcnanneay@oregoned.org or 503-495-2153

Time to change rules
by Ray Johnson
With the start of another membership year, the OEA-Retired Bylaws and Policies Committee is accepting proposed changes to our Bylaws and Policies for submission to the March 1 Annual Assembly.

To review our governance documents go to oearetired.oregoned.org and click on Documents. The latest that proposals can be submitted is December 31.

However, if proposals are sent in to the president before November 1, the committee can handle them better.

If you have any questions, please contact me at rayugene@att.net or 503-887-0467.

Members of the Committee are: Chair Ray Johnson, Judy Christensen, Ruth Greiner, Jeanette Kmetic, Regina Norris, Mavis Randklev, Karen Watters, and Eileen Wende.

Masks save lives
by Marleen Wallingford
The Center for Disease Control says if everyone wore a mask, we could control the spread of COVID-19.

The original CDC guidelines, which did not recommend mask wearing, was based on the belief there was low disease prevalence which now has been found not to be true.

Studies have found that viral load peaks in the days before symptoms begin and that speaking is enough to expel virus-carrying droplets.

People are the most communicable when they do not realize that they are carrying the virus. Wearing a mask is not a political statement. Science has proven it stops the spread, not only of COVID-19 but other airborne illnesses.
More pop trivia for seniors

by Ray Johnson
Do you remember?
• Lego toys, 1949, name comes from the Danish “leg godt,” which means “play well.”
• Mr. Potato Head, 1952, the Toy Story movies have ensured its longevity.
• The pill, 1960, there is no sexual revolution without it.
• James Bond, 1962, the first movie with latest one out this year.
• Cheerios, 1941, these oat rings remain the top-selling cereal.
• Cheetos, 1948, love the orange stain.
• Pop-Tarts, 1964, named for Andy Warhol’s pop movement.
• Star Trek, 1966, with the latest iteration back on tv, Star Trek: Picard.
• Green Eggs and Ham, 1960, beloved by boomers and grandkids.
• To Kill a Mockingbird, 1960, one million copies are still purchased each year.

An eagle-eyed reader, Kent Spring, caught an error in last issues Pop Trivia. Stevie Wonder’s first hit was in 1963 when he was 13 years old; not 1950 which is the year of his birth.

Every child

Continued from Page 1.
and Wheeler. I have reached out to the OEA UniServ consultants in those areas, but if you live in any of those counties, or know someone who does who might like some books, please contact me at gogirl2@comcast.net.

We can provide books for medical and dental clinics, hospitals, social service agencies, daycare centers—anywhere there are kids who can take the books home for keeps. In the spring, a couple of teachers requested books to take to their students when they made home visits. Since most libraries are either closed or open on a limited basis this is a good way to get books out to kids.

Finally, here’s a great website with suggested books for kids on an important and current topic. https://modernmomlife.com/childrens-books-about-race-racism/. Here’s a quote from Michelle, who runs the site: “It’s never too early to talk to your kids about race and racism. One way to spark conversations is through reading children’s books together.”

And “Teaching empathy in early childhood is important for many reasons. When you teach your kids about empathy, you are putting them in other people’s shoes. Teaching our kids to be kind to others is more important now than ever. It encourages tolerance and acceptance of others.”

I found most of the books on amazon.com, and they are beautifully written and illustrated. They would make wonderful gifts for your grandkids, neighbors or friends. Stay safe everyone, just like my bear.

The Black Lives Matter movement has gained momentum since Americans have viewed the horrific scenes of a man’s last eight minutes and 42 seconds of life. We are now hearing terms like antiracist. What exactly does that mean?

Ibram X Kendi explains from his award winning book, “How to be an Antiracist” that racism is a belief system that one group of people is superior or more deserving of privilege than another group of people. The opposite of being a racist is not being a racist.

If you accept the status quo, you are supporting racism. To counter racism, you need to be actively working to dismantling the structures that support disparate treatment of people. You need to be an antiracist. The policies that we have adopted have resulted in the racial inequities we see today.

Even the term, Black Lives Matter, has called into question, “Why Don’t All Lives Matter?” BLM because they haven’t mattered before. Black people are twice as likely to be killed by police compared to a white person. We need to change that. Black lives do matter.

Definitions explained

by Marleen Wallingford

Remembering our members

Mary Spillman, Amboy, Wa June 4, 2020

Frances Hulbert, Aurora, OR June 10, 2020

Bill Goslow, Cresent Valley, OR July 19, 2019

James Goodwin, McMinnville, OR September 15, 2019
The historic Grand Hotel on Mackinac Island advertises itself as having the world's largest porch.

Travel plans made

by Ray Johnson

As for everyone, COVID-19 has been messing up everything! We still have the OEA-Retired-sponsored trip, Treasures of Egypt, planned for November but Collette, our travel partner, has intimated that it will be canceled, as Spotlight on New York City was canceled for September.

Moving on to 2020, the last issue of PrimeTimes highlighted our first trip of Bluegrass Country & the Smoky Mountains for April 22-30, and, now, here is Mackinac Island—see sidebar for details—in July.

This classic Midwestern tour features Illinois and Michigan. You will land in Chicago for an overnight stay and explore that wonderful city the next day with a local guide.

Part of the afternoon will be on your own with a welcome dinner with fellow travelers that evening.

The following day will be a bus trip along the East side of Lake Michigan with a stop to see Traverse City, the cherry capital of the world with many vineyards. On the fourth day you will arrive at the very northern part of Michigan for a ferry boat ride to Mackinac Island.

As no motorized vehicles are allowed on the island, you will ride by horse-drawn carriage to the luxury Grand Hotel for your two-night stay.

After seeing and exploring the island by horse and buggy for two days, the trip continues to Frankenmuth, a Bavarian-styled town with the largest Christmas store in the world.

The next day is a bus trip to Dearborn in Southern Michigan to experience the inspirational Henry Ford Museum and view the historic homes at Greenfield Village, including the famous American workshops of Thomas Edison, Henry Ford and Robert Frost. This trip will have the lowest activity level.

Our other two trips will be featured in future issues of PrimeTimes.

Members of the Travel Committee are: Chair Nancy Lewis, Susie Garrison, Ray Johnson, Carolyn Ramey and Cindy Williams.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OEA-Retired Travel 2021-22</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Bluegrass Country & the Smoky Mountains**
April 22-30, 2021. 9 days with 12 meals.

**Mackinac Island**
July 9-16, 2021. 8 days with 11 meals.

**Southern Italy and Sicily**
October 22-November 3. 12 days with 16 meals.

**Journey though South America**
January 2022. 16 days with 21 meals.
Cost: $6,249 (price may change). Deposit due: July 2021.

Cost is per person for double occupancy and includes transfer and airfare from Portland.

For Bluegrass, or Mackinac Island, contact Susie Garrison at 541-620-0387 or susieq8170@gmail.com.

For Southern Italy, or South America, contact Nancy Lewis at 503-639-7050 or nancyjolewis@gmail.com.
Remember the OEA Foundation

by Anne Jones

There will continue to be more extreme need for students and families in this coming year. Last spring the Foundation Board made a change to the rules regarding what Foundation monies can be used for, due to the greater needs as a result of COVID-19.

In addition to only helping students, grants were given to families to help with food, rent, and utilities. You can make a donation by mailing a check to:
Oregon Education Association 6900 SW Atlanta St. Portland, Oregon 97223
or you can make a donation online by going to the OEA webpage.

www.oregoned.org OEA Foundation Donation
or you can send in form from membership mailing.

PLEASE HELP OREGON CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES!

As OEA Foundation takes no administrative costs, your tax deductible donation goes 100 percent to help students.

A good read

by Marleen Wallingford
The autobiography, “Unwanted” by Kien Nguyen, tells his story of growing up in Vietnam. After the Communists took power, his family struggled but his fiercely independent mother would not let their impoverished circumstances dampen her spirit. The title explains how he was treated in Vietnam as a mixed-race child.

His second novel, “The Tapestries,” is an imagined story of his grandparent’s life during French colonial rule. As a young child, his grandfather sees his father beheaded by a local community leader. This leads him on a page-turning journey where he escapes, eventually finds work as an embroiderer in the court of the last Vietnamese king and falls in love.

The complication is that he was married as a seven year old to a 20-year old woman (so the family can benefit from her free labor). She pretends to be his mother when they go into hiding. The new love has her own secrets. This is a story about love, revenge and power.