We were elated last year. Oregon had finally achieved landmark legislation that had reversed the downward trend of school funding since the passage of Proposition 5 in 1990. On May 8, 2019, over 20,000 supporters of education gathered at Portland’s waterfront to march for schools. It was so affirming to see so many supporters for school funding. We finally felt we were going to get some relief from budget cuts to decrease class size, return media specialists, art teachers and counselors.

All that changed when COVID-19 hit. Not only have our daily lives changed, government services are facing a looming crisis. Now with the biggest unemployment since the Great Depression, we are looking at decreased revenue.

The business community is asking for a delay in implementation of the Student Success Act with the current economic crisis. We must tell our legislators that our students cannot afford to lose any revenue. The tax rate to pay for these critical investments is low—just over half of one percent—and only applies to businesses with sales over $1 million, which applies to less than 10 percent.

Continued on Page 6.
by President Bobbi Yambasu

We have entered upon a new world! Who would have thought we would be in a time when one is required to wear a mask into a bank or store? The world has indeed turned.

Some good has come out of the COVID-19 Stay Home orders. Some families have reconnected and rediscovered the benefits of shared activities—game nights, movie nights, meals together. Most of us are driving less and noticing the positive changes to our climate as a result.

We have discovered just how much we appreciate our friends and family; how important those connections are. And, we now have more empathy for those in isolation. Isolation and its detrimental affects are two things that I hope this time causes us to try to ‘fix’.

We have discovered that we can still adapt and change. Many of us have been propelled into the 21st century. As someone who has been Zoomed (that’s my current term) on a regular basis both for fun and volunteerism, I have learned that although I don’t like phone conferences, I don’t mind Zoom meetings.

Generally speaking, I can at least see people at a Zoom meeting. I have been to Zoom wine tastings, Zoom Happy Hours, Zoom meetings, Zoom family get-togethers. I don’t get to be waited on during the events, but I do get to see the people I care about.

As an organization, OEA-Retired has also had to learn to adapt. By the time you receive this newsletter, we will have conducted committee meetings, regional meetings and Board meetings by Zoom. We may have discovered a means to have more involvement in our important committees by our membership. (While there are some problems with the Zoom platform, it does seem more reliable than Skype.)

This is a good time to remind all of us that one doesn’t have to commit to being on the OEA-Retired Board of Directors in order to be involved with our committees. Some people just want to be involved at a smaller scale. If you would like to join one of our committees, please let me know; we are always looking for new members. [OEA-Retired Committees are Budget, Bylaws and Continued on Page 3]
Remarks
Continued from Page 2
Policies, Communications, Conference, Foundation, Legislative, Literacy, Membership, Nominations and Elections, and Travel.

Some committees require more meetings and involvement than others. Feel free to contact me at 503-233-1341 or bobbly4967@gmail.com if you want to know more about our committees.

While I am on the subject of committees, NEA-Retired is also looking for members for some of its virtual committees (these committees meet via phone conference, not generally in person). NEA-Retired committees needing members are Membership, Communications, Legislative and PAC Fund-raising. If you are interested in any of the NEA-Retired committees, let me know and I will pass on your interest to the NEA-Retired President. NEA-Retired virtual committees meet about four times per year.

While we have been so involved with the COVID-19 crisis, we must not forget that other aspects of our lives are not on hold. We still have a general election ahead of us, school funding is again in jeopardy as state revenues are down and some big business wants the state to delay implementation of the tax that funds the newly passed Student Success Act, homelessness is on the rise again, both the racial and poverty divides are increasing, not decreasing, fossil fuel emissions still threaten our quality of life, etc. There is still much for us to do.

Oregon delegation takes action
by Maureen Barnhart
Representative Suzanne Bonamici, in collaboration with Senators Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley, has been working to support medical workers (particularly with appropriate PPE), and to support childcare resources for those workers.

They seek funding to assist with the costs to parents for their childcare, and to help cover operating expenses of those offering that child care. These workers deserve hazard pay and the protections offered through robust labor standards, and our representatives are advocating for those standards.

During Teacher Appreciation Week, Rep. Peter DeFazio sent out a link to education resources from the Library of Congress along with his acknowledgement of the efforts educators are making.

Rep. Kurt Schrader invites constituents who are having problems accessing federal support that has been made available during the pandemic to contact his office at 202-225-5711. These are times in which many predators perpetrate fraud—we are warned to be careful!

Sen. Wyden and 24 other U.S. senators sent a letter dated May 5, regarding education and support for our students. The letter seeks support for students who experience disabilities by providing emergency funding to support educators, as well as funding to support remote learning and to ensure that IEP goals continue to be met.

There is also a specific call for funding for early childhood programs.

As a team, Sens. Merkley and Wyden announced, also on May 5, funding to help feed over 350,000 children in Oregon through an EBT card issued with the value of the free school breakfast and lunch reimbursement rates.

Sen. Merkley is the top Democrat on the Appropriations subcommittee overseeing the USDA.

As you are probably aware, those who participated in OEA PAC have recommended reelection of the four incumbent Congressional representatives and Sen. Merkley. There was no recommendation in CD 2 as no viable candidates agreed to join us at the Convention in March.

Join OEA-Retired
by Terri Domenigoni
Congratulations to Luann Danforth, from Sisters, Oregon. She is the OEA-Retired winner of the fully paid NEA-Retired Lifetime membership. She was surprised and had forgotten about the drawing when she signed up last September.

For those active and newly retired members, we will be offering drawings next year for two NEA-Retired Lifetime memberships. One will be awarded to members who sign up for a fully paid OEA-Retired Lifetime membership from August 1, 2020-June 1, 2021. The other will be awarded to active members who sign up Continued on Page 4.
If you are a victim of a hate or bias incident, report to the Oregon Department of Justice 1-844-924-BIAS (2427)

The hotline has trained staff available Monday-Friday who will help victims connect with resources. Name calling and racist comments may not rise to the level of a criminal act but they are still hurtful and traumatizing.

While hate and bias incidents sometimes target specific individuals, they often violate an entire group or community’s sense of safety and belonging.

Graffiti on the wall, fliers, anonymous emails and language meant to harass individuals convey intolerance that impacts all of us.

You can help
by Marleen Wallingford

It was a beautiful spring day. I was on the streets of Portland waiting for a bus. There was a group of middle school boys goofing around like kids will do. Suddenly they caught sight of another boy who had a physical disability. They made some derogatory comments about his appearance. I observed the interaction but as a bystander, I should have been an ally.

What can we as individuals do when we see bullying or harassing behavior? It helps to be prepared with a plan.

Unfortunately in our current political climate we have seen a rise not only in harassment but also a rise in hate crimes nationwide against the African American, LGBTQ, Latinx, Jewish and Muslim communities and most recently a rise against Asian Americans who are perceived as being responsible for COVID-19. We need to be safe but we also need to show compassion and caring for the victim.

There are some actions that you can take that can help to make the victim and communities who face intimidation and harassment more welcome and safe.

Distract—this is an indirect approach to a situation. Begin a conversation with the victim so you are interrupting the interaction with the perpetrator. “Where is a good place to eat around here?” “May I sit by you?”

Delegate—ask for help. Ask another bystander, “Go tell the bus driver?”

Document—quietly film or record the interaction and later, offer to send/give it to the victim so they can decide what to do.

Delay—afterwards, acknowledge what you saw to the victim, “That was not ok.”

Direct—speak up about the disrespectful behavior when it’s happening but only do this if you feel safe. “That is a mean thing to say.” “Leave him alone. He’s not bothering you.

Join
Continued from Page 3.

for an OEA-Retired Lifetime membership at the 2021 Rep Assembly. This year in 2019-20, 36 members signed up for the membership so members have a good chance of winning the membership. Sign up this fall as either a Pre-Retired or Retired OEA Lifetime member and you could win a fully paid NEA-Lifetime Retired membership worth $300. Sign up at the 2021 RA and you could also win a fully paid NEA-Lifetime Retired membership.

Members can sign up for Lifetime membership at anytime whether they are an active or retired member.

For those members who do not want to pay the Lifetime membership all at once, OEA has a one-year payment plan where you can pay $10 with your application and then pay $20 a month for 12 months.

Members are now able to pay their membership by credit card also.

Retired members who want to pay an annual membership can pay yearly. The cost is $25 to OEA-Retired and $35 to NEA-Retired for a total of $60 per year. OEA-Retired Lifetime cost is $250 and NEA-Retired Lifetime cost is $300. For more information you can check out our web page at oaretired@oregoned.org.

This spring we were unable to host our luncheon for active members at RA.

Contact Chris Jarrett if you have moved and/or changed your email address.

chris.jarrett@oregoned.org
or 503-495-2153
by Maureen Barnhart
(Author’s warning: It is difficult to be objective in writing this article.)

Mere months ago the Oregon Legislature reached sine die (adjournment), there was a certain sense of optimism that funding for schools had finally been improved with the passage of the “game-changing Student Success Act.”

The Legislation meant a $1.275 billion increase in school funding for the 2019 to 2021 biennium, and investments in class size, well-rounded education, increased time, and in social and emotional learning.

It was a game-changing act, but it came at a cost: efforts to consider environmental health and climate change were not allowed. Our colleagues were put in the position again of being forced into benefit losses through unfair changes in PERS, impacting mostly tier three/OPSRP and tier two members.

The economic impacts of the COVID 19 pandemic have had an enormous and very negative impact on so many aspects of our lives, and the impact on education is dramatic and will be spun in a way disrespectful of public education and educators:

Although the structure for funding the Student Success Act remains in place, the corporations that will earn enough income to contribute (and/or the amount that would be assessed) will be dramatically cut.

Oregon’s tax structure is based largely on income, and U.S. unemployment is at levels not seen since the Depression. (U.S. level is 14.7% and Oregon may see 20% for April.)

Governor Kate Brown has indicated that she will cut the state budget by eight and one-half percent. Because one year of the biennium has almost passed, the cuts will actually be 17 percent for the second year of the biennium. Although this could be an “across the boards” cut, it is likely that Governor Brown will make the cuts more targeted, and that might help, but school district budgets for next year ARE NOT HEALTHY.

For example, the cuts in Hillsboro, the fourth largest district, are estimated to be $23 million.

As school districts across the state start to look at the budgets, one option presenting itself is to furlough staff—as has been done in the past. If the furlough is started this year, a district the size of Hillsboro could see a “savings” (talking $ here, not the values we appreciate as educators) of $4 million for next year (or 10 teachers).

And the CARES Act, which was instituted to help those who are under- or unemployed means that furloughed staff will be paid 2/3 of their earnings for that day with an additional $600 (again, to stimulate the economy).

Some money will be saved to promote a better educational experience for our students next year, better than what the cuts will allow.

Of course, there will be detractors and those who will accuse the employees of manipulation. The fact is protocols were put into place, and furloughs were about to be implemented, with negotiation, of course. Already Betsy Hammond, writer with The Oregonian, describes it thus:

“So weekly gross pay could rise from about $2,290 to about $2,565, a raise of nearly 12 percent for doing less work.”

We know that educators never do “less work”, and Hammond, while quoting several PPS officials who describe this as a last resort, still manages to make this some sort of cheat by school districts.

Educators are going to be portrayed in a negative light, and many of our own colleagues will question the ethics of this situation themselves. Please help them understand the desperation of this situation, and let’s commit to do what we can to intentionally educate the public about the need to find resources for our schools.
Gardening is good for your mental health

by Ray Johnson

By this time, you probably are not much interested in hearing anything more about COVID-19, but this is somewhat on the more light-hearted side, if that is possible.

With more time on our hands, we might want to take the advice of a professor of geriatric medicine at Washington University, St. Louis, who says, “Gardening has been shown in multiple studies to be associated with a reduced risk of cognitive decline or dementia in older adults.’

Thus, not only can we have something active to do with the increased time on our hands due to the sequestering at home, but it also helps us mentally, and beautifies our place.

A registered horticulture therapist further says that, “Plants help you become more competent and give you something meaningful to do and take care of.” And, they do not require cleanup or constant feeding as with animal pets.

Here are some indoor plants to consider:

• Peace lilies help to purify the air by removing certain toxins found in paint and varnish.
• Orchids are good gifts for hospital patients, as well as in your home, as they reduce pain and anxiety.
• Rosemary scent may assist with memory by increasing a neurotransmitter.
• Lavender is best in the bedroom as it’s said to improve sleep quality and promote relaxation.
• Spider plants are hardy and can help remove formaldehyde from your home’s air. Furthermore, they all brighten up a room.

Good read

by Marleen Wallingford

As a young girl, my favorite activity was to get on my Schwinn bike and pedal down to the Woodstock Library and borrow a pile of books. I can still remember the feeling of anticipation as I brought my selections home.

Libraries have a special place in my heart. I was delighted to discover another library lover, Susan Orleans who wrote “The Library Book” that tells not only the story of the 1986 fire of the downtown Los Angeles Library that destroyed over a million books but explores the role that libraries have played in our lives.

This is a nonfiction book, so unlike fiction mysteries where problems can be solved, the arsonist in this case has never been found.

Pop trivia for seniors

by Ray Johnson

Ready for your next Trivia Contest, or just to refresh your memory? Here is a list of items that we experienced as youngsters, and still have staying power at more than 50 years of age.
• Birkenstocks, 1964, 25 million are still sold each year.
• American Express, 1958, remember having to use Traveler’s Checks?
• Bikini, 1946.
• M&Ms, 1941, still the most popular candy on earth.
• UPS, 1953, until drones take over, we still see it every day.
• Ford Mustang, 1964, the muscle car still persists.
• Tupperware, 1946, how many parties did you attend?
• Jeopardy!, 1964, nearly 10 million people watch every night.
• Stevie Wonder, 1950 debut album at age 12.
• Spandex, 1959, stretches more than 500 percent.
• Ice cooler, 1953.
• Gatorade, 1965, began the sports-drink boom.
• Microwave, 1945, and still beeping.
• Skateboard, 1959, its popularity has it entering the 2020, now 2021, Tokyo Olympics for the first time.
• Big Mac, 1968, second in popularity on to French fries.
• Color TV, 1950.
• The Beatles, 1962, could life have existed without them?

Funding

Continued from Page 1

The National Education Association is calling on Congress to allocate an additional $175 billion to stabilize education funding. The $30.7 billion authorized thus far is not nearly enough. It’s clear that the economic impact of COVID-19 is devastating for all public services.
OEA-Retired Travel

2021-22

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 American, contact Nancy Lewis at 503-639-7050 or nancyjolewis@gmail.com.

Travel plans made

by Ray Johnson

With the April deadlines past for signing up for our OEA-Retired 2020 tours, it is time to focus on the 2021-22 trips.

The first one coming up is Bluegrass Country & the Smoky Mountains on April 22-30 for nine days with 12 meals. The cost is $2,999 with deposit due Oct. 15, 2020.

This trip will be a delightful trip through the heart of Appalachia, discovering the equestrian culture of Kentucky, the pioneer spirit of Tennessee, and the mountainous beauty of North Carolina. Get a taste of bourbon, baseball, and thoroughbreds in Louisville and Lexington, Kentucky.

Travel through Daniel Boone National Forest as you make your way to Gatlinburg, Tennessee. From your home base of Gatlinburg, explore the natural wonders of Great Smoky Mountains National Park. After a day of exploring, relax and tap your toes during Dolly Parton's Stampede and Show.

Travel on to Asheville, North Carolina, and enjoy the city's historic architecture, engaging neighborhoods and robust arts districts. Tour the Biltmore Estate, George Vanderbilt's "little mountain escape" in the Blue Ridge Mountains. When you leave, you'll have the warmth and charm of southern Appalachia still in your heart.

The activity level for Bluegrass is rated 2, which involves walking over a variety of terrains or several city blocks.

Our other three trips will be featured in future issues of PrimeTimes. In the sidebar, please notice that specific dates and a guaranteed rate has been added for Mackinac Island and Southern Italy and Sicily.

Members of the Travel Committee are: Chair Nancy Lewis, Susie Garrison, Ray Johnson and Cindy Williams.
YOU CAN HELP!

Every day, students in our schools need school supplies, clothes, shoes, eyeglasses, hearing aids.

Can you donate to assure them a better education!

With requests from teachers, the OEA Foundation provides basic items to students across the state. Many OEA and OEA-Retired members are making contributions in this effort. There are four ways to assist the Foundation:

✔ Mail a check to OEA Foundation (6900 SW Atlanta St., Portland, OR 97223), or donate online at www.oregoned.org/oeafoundation.
✔ Earn redeemable points by registering your Fred Meyer Rewards card at www.fredmeyer.com/communityrewards (use Foundation number 856810, or your Amazon account at smile.amazon.com (type in OEA Foundation).

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

Articles needed

by Marleen Wallingford

You will notice that this issue has several articles written by myself. We need other voices. Please send me a review of the latest book, movie or opinion you have that you would like to share. What’s the latest volunteer activity you are pursuing? Where is an interesting place to visit? What is it like to be a grandparent? Have you tried the latest kitchen gadget, the air fryer?

Send your articles to me at marleenwong@gmail.com.

Our readers would enjoy finding out about our interests.

The COVID-19 outbreak has shown us that a single action today has a powerful domino effect that WILL either benefit or harm another. We are all interconnected.