OEA-Retired travels the world

By Ray Johnson

With only the Albuquerque Balloon Fiesta remaining this year for our OEA-Retired-sponsored tours (see sidebar on Page 7), the OEA-Retired Travel Committee has planned several for 2018.

America’s Music Cities: March 18-25. Take in the sights and sounds of the holidays in America’s most famed musical cities of New Orleans, Memphis and Nashville. Revel in the sounds of the blues, jazz, country and good old rock ‘n’ roll.

Experience America’s most singular city in New Orleans, where the world’s great jazz musicians reside. Have your choice, either stroll through New Orleans’ famous French Quarter on a walking tour with a local expert, stopping to taste a true New Orleans favorite—beignets—or set out on a panoramic motor coach tour for a different perspective of the city.

Also, discover how to cook New Orleans-style during a unique cooking demonstration at the New Orleans School of Cooking. End your stay here with a Louisiana's swamp tour on a narrated cruise.

Spend two nights in Memphis, "birthplace of the blues,” at the Gaylord Opryland Resort and marvel at the acres of stunning décor. Tour the city with local musicians who will share the story of the city’s musical heritage and history, followed by a visit to Elvis Presley’s Graceland.

Discover the historic Belle Meade plantation along with wine tasting and homemade sweets, and sample Tennessee whisky at a local distillery with a rich history. Enjoy reserved seats at the Grand Ole Opry, the “home of American music”

The last day begins with a visit to a local radio station and then a sightseeing tour of the state Capitol, Music Row and the Parthenon—a full replica of the Athenian original. Last stop will be a visit to the Country Music Hall of Fame and the historic RCA Studio B, where country legends recorded hit songs.

Discover Panama: April 19-27 (date was changed from January).

Explore the colors and natural beauty of Panama. In Panama City, stay at the Gamboa Rainforest Resort Cruise for three nights in a river view room, with a balcony and hammock! Join your guide for a nature walk through the jungle forest and then travel via dugout canoe to meet the indigenous Emberá people and experience their handicrafts, dances and a simple traditional lunch.

Traverse a partial transit of the Panama Canal through two locks aboard the Pacific Queen and disembark at the Mercado de Mariscos to Continued on Page 7.

Election results

By Eileen Wende

The following OEA-Retired members have been elected to the OEA-Board and to represent OEA-Retired members at the OEA-RA and the NEA-RA.

Treasurer Mavis Randklev
Region III Director Ruth Greiner
AT-LARGE Director Paul Zastrow
NEA RA Delegate Eileen Wende
By President Terri Domenigoni

As I was contemplating on what to write to you about this Spring, I was having some difficulty deciding what to write. Working outside in my yard on the first real day of sunny weather I realized HOPE would be a good topic. We all have been plagued by the cold wintery, rainy weather this year. The hope that the rain will eventually go away and bring some summer sun is what helps most of us get through winter.

The first day where people could be out in the sun, hope is what drove most of us to move forward and get out to enjoy it, thinking we were moving on to warmer weather.

Nationally, hope is what keeps me going. My hope is that our government and Constitution will survive and be stronger in the long term as we are challenged to get active and make sure our voices are heard. We can't all go to Washington, D.C. to march, but we can send emails and make phone calls to our legislators to make sure they are doing what is right for our country and our state.

We can participate in local marches, wear Read for Ed to support education and become more involved in our local and state governments and our association.

My hope for our Retired Association is that we have new educators who want to join our retired members. We have 2,100 members and of that only 40-100 are active and participating in our activities. My hope would be to see more folks participating in the monthly regional activities, the Fall Conference and the Annual Assembly in the Spring, and running for the OEA-Retired Board or another leadership position.

Annual dues members may now pay for a lifetime membership on our new payment plan. Already retired annual members can also sign up to become a member on our new plan. Active members can sign up too for the membership plan as a pre-retired member.

It would be great if we could increase our membership to fight to keep Public Education funded, raise money for the OEA Foundation and get books to children throughout Oregon by

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2016-17 Calendar

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<td>June 27-28</td>
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2017

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Federal voucher plan takes funds from public education

By Ray Johnson

NEA reports that the rhetoric by President Donald Trump and Education Secretary Betsy DeVos about vouchers will take scarce funding, as we well know, away from the 90 percent of students who attend public schools. Their plan would create two different education systems—one private and one public—both, however, funded by taxpayers.

The Trump-DeVos voucher proposal has drawn opposition from key federal elected officials, including U.S. Senator Patty Murray of Washington, who is the ranking member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions committee.

In a memo to her Senate colleagues, Murray wrote: “In many rural areas, there are no, or very few, private school options. Students in rural areas often have to travel very far to attend the nearest school. Without taxpayer-funded transportation, arranging private transportation would be prohibitively expensive and time-consuming for many families in rural areas. For these students and families, their public school is the only real option and claims to the contrary only amount to a ‘false choice.’ ”

Furthermore, the public schools often serve as the social center of the community and the sole provider of critical services such as summer lunch and other programs, food pantries and sports.

According to the Center for American Progress, vouchers are highly unlikely to work and could decimate the public system in nearly 9,000 school districts that have four or fewer school buildings.

After excluding charter schools and regional agencies that are legally considered school districts, 85 percent of the 11,200 regular school districts fall into these two categories of sparse and average districts (a unified school district with five to eight schools, an elementary-school-only district with four to five schools, or a secondary-school-only district with three to five schools), where vouchers are entirely or more than likely to be unworkable, concluded CAP.

In a Washington Post article, using Maine and Alaska as examples of states where rural districts are common, two reporters summarized the shortcomings of the Trump-DeVos proposal this way: “Washington has long designed education policy to deal with urban and suburban challenges, often overlooking the unique problems that face rural schools.

With a new administration in the White House that prefers “school-choice” approaches—favoring charter schools and private-school vouchers so parents can opt out of public schools and bring taxpayer dollars with them—the nation’s rural schools are left to wonder about their fate.”

Concern over the Trump-DeVos voucher proposal’s effect on rural schools and DeVos’ lack of understanding of the needs of rural schools was a major factor why DeVos was the first cabinet nominee in U.S. history to require the vice president to cast a tie-breaking vote. Two Republican senators from states that are highly rural, Susan Collins of Maine and Lisa Murkowski of Alaska, voted against confirming DeVos.

For the Oregon Congressional delegation, our two senators and four of our five representatives generally have opposed voucher systems, while Rep. Greg Walden’s stand is unknown. Would you please contact your federal representatives to urge them to continue their opposition to diverting billions of dollars to vouchers or similar privatization schemes?

The best way to contact is by email or phone. For email, go to their website or use the NEA website, http://edadvocacy.nea.org. For phone, their numbers are in the OEA Calendar Book or, again, on their website.

If you need any assistance or further information contact Ray Johnson, our OEA/NEA Congressional Advocacy Team member for Oregon’s five federal representatives, at rayugene@att.net or 503-887-0467. At the present time the position for our senators is vacant.

What is a teacher?
The candle which lights others in consuming itself.

Giovanni Ruffini
NEA Retired meets in Dallas

By Secretary Paul Zastrow

Dallas in the springtime was beautiful for the NEA-Retired Organizing Conference. Four intrepid travelers flew on Alaska Air: President Terri Domenigoni, Vice President Judy Richards, Treasurer-to-be Mavis Randklev and me—Secretary Paul Zastrow.

The opening session began with a welcome from NEA-Retired President Tom Curran, as well as a big ‘HI’ from Texas State Teachers Association-Retired President Louise Watkins.

The keynote was from Mel House—titled “What Up Old People?” She had quite a message of what we are really about—the dynamics of getting things done, of activism in all we do, and even how to cope with kids these days! She claims herself to be a “Social Justice, Ninja Warrior and Union Thug”—not bad for a humorous PE Teacher.

Needless to say the auction for the NEA Fund for Children and Public Education started with a bang.

The next day Judy Bryant, a field organizer for Texas Alliance for Retired Americans gave us some “Post Election Realities for Seniors” summarizing what happened in November and what we can expect in the near future.

The afternoon sessions were repeated from the morning. One of my sessions was Running for School Board. It was interesting to see how others run for office as well as what all conditions must be met—one lady said she spent over $20,000 in her race for an unpaid seat.

Then came the real highlight of the whole Conference—Becky Pringle gave a speech on “Racial Justice in Education and What We Can Do.” What power! All I can say is that with Pringle coming up to become NEA President, we can’t go wrong!

Overall, I would say that while the topics were not really broad enough to meet our collective desires, connecting with others as well as helping with OEA President Hanna Vaandering’s candidacy for NEA Executive Committee made it worthwhile.

Join lifetime OEA-Retired

By Treasurer Bobbi Yambasu

You do not need to pay dues every year. The OEA-Retired Membership Committee has created the establishment of two new ways to become a Lifetime OEA-Retired member.

In addition to a one-time payment of $250, we now have two payment plan options. The first allows a potential member to pay $10 down and then make 12 monthly payments of $20 (from checking or savings).

The second allows the member to pay $10 down and make 24 monthly payments of $10. Once the total of $250 is paid, the member never has to pay OEA-Retired dues again!

In addition, in order to encourage people to join as Lifetime members, we have a special promotion! For the first 50 people who decide to join and complete the full payment, using any of the three payment options, OEA-Retired will rebate $50.

Application forms are available from the membership department of OEA or online.

John Larson our recently elected president of the Oregon Education Association promotes the OEA-Retired’s Literacy Project at the OEA Representative Assembly in April. Photo by Janet Jackson
Rep Assembly plans future

By Janet Jackson

The 2017 Representative Assembly began at 6:30 p.m. April 21 with a beautiful rendition of the National Anthem by Josh Rist of the Salem-Keizer Education Association.

President Hanna Vaandering gave her final report to the delegation and introduced Dr. Johny Lake, administrator on special assignment with the Eugene 4J School District, and consultant and speaker certified in programs respecting leadership, diversity, equity and ethics for youth and adults. (Dr. Lake led a hearing later in the evening on “Equity, Diversity and Social Justice.”)

Next were speeches from the candidates for OEA offices before dispersing to a variety of hearings and meetings, followed by a reception in the St. Helens Ballroom sponsored by VOYA, Moda Health and California Casualty. Good food, LOUD music!

The Saturday sessions were all about the business of OEA —regional caucuses, New Business Items, Legislative Objectives, Resolutions and Bylaws Amendments. One of the more hotly debated amendments was to increase the term of office for OEA president and vice president from two to three years. The amendment failed.

Of interest to OEA-Retired members was a New Business Item to renew 2016 NBI 7 “that OEA work with coalition partners to lobby the Oregon Investment Council and State treasurer to divest the Public Employee Retirement System from stocks and funds that are in fossil fuels.” The item passed.

Other New Business Items that passed include NBI 6.a: “that OEA locals encourage their school districts and NEA not to accept money from the Gates Foundation and foundations backed by billionaires and corporations attempting to privatize education” and NBI 16: “that OEA investigate the steps to creating a state recognized Education Support Professional of the year like the statewide Teacher of the Year.”

It will also continue to be a Legislative Priority that “OEA work to keep Oregon’s promise to educators and other public servants by saying no to illegal and unfair attacks on the retirement benefits committed to our public employees.”

As a follow-up to a request for books from the OEA-Retired Literacy Project from Lookingglass Elementary School in Winston-Dillard, which suffered a devastating fire over Winter Break, we requested monetary donations from the Assembly. We were pleased to be able to send not only 215 books but also $864 for new books to Lookingglass.

Election results were announced after lunch as follows: President C. John Larson, Vice President Reed Scott-Schwalbach, NEA Director Jennifer Scurlock, NEA Director Enrique Farrera and Region III Vice President Corinne Swan.

OEA-Retired was recognized by OEA-PIE for having the highest average contribution per individual, again.

In a “Point of Personal Privilege” OEA-Retired President Terri Domenigoni and Treasurer/Membership Chair Bobbi Yambasu announced the new OEA-Retired Lifetime Membership program.

Payable in one-year ($20/month) or two-year ($10/month) plans, upon completion of payments participants will get back $50 from OEA-Retired. What a deal! This is available to pre-retired OEA members as well as OEA-Retired members currently paying annual dues.

Oregon Teacher of the Year, Gloria Pereyra-Robertson of Medford addressed the assembly with a well-received speech in which she shared a beautiful children’s story about diversity, “The Crayon Box That Talked,” by Shane DeRolf. This book would make a great gift for your young grandchildren.

Saturday evening concluded with the Awards Banquet. U.S. Representative Suzanne Bonamici was the keynote speaker as OEA’s Friend of Education, addressing the uphill battle we have in protecting and promoting public education.

This year the first recipients of the OEA-Retired Lifetime Service Award, were given to OEA-Retired members Jeanne Mackie and Steve Hillis. Congratulations!

The OEA-Retired tables in the foyer were busy throughout the RA. The OEA Foundation table, manned by OEA-Retired member Bob Jones, et al., raised $2,758. And we collected 927 books for the Literacy Project! A big thank you to OEA Vice President (and now President-Elect) C. John

Continued on Page 6.
By Gary Campbell

Lindsay Curletto is an ASPIRE Coordinator and College and Center Coordinator at Sam Barlow High School. Each day she works with adult volunteers who help students explore career and educational pathways and apply for scholarship and grants.

She says: “I love mentoring students and being a part of their decision-making process. Their success becomes my success. Whether it’s a financial challenge or a family barrier or any other kind of barrier, I get to challenge all of their fears and let them see, education beyond high school is possible.”

ASPIRE, a volunteer mentoring program through the State of Oregon, matches trained and supportive volunteers with middle and high school students to help them plan for postsecondary training and education. Volunteers are the key to the students’ success. Simple things, from helping research career and educational options to following up on deadlines, opens a world of possibilities for students. All ASPIRE volunteers have found the experience rewarding and impactful.

One ASPIRE volunteer said, “Many people want to contribute to their communities in one way or another; ASPIRE provides a unique opportunity to contribute to the future of a community.”

Learn more about the program on their website: www.Oregonstudentaid.gov/ASPIRE.

**Remarks**

Continued from Page 2.

Are many opportunities to have your voices heard though OEA and OEA-Retired. Remember you retired from position, not your profession. Keep hope alive by being involved, invigorated and in touch.

In closing, I would like to congratulate our first OEA-Retired Lifetime Achievement Award winners. Two very deserving retired members, Jeanne Mackie and Steve Hillis were given this award at the RA Banquet. Both members have served in many capacities throughout their careers in OEA, NEA, and OEA-Retired. Hope all members have a great summer!
Travels

Continued from Page 1. to sample fresh Panamanian ceviche. Visit the revitalized historic district in Panama City, Casco Viejo, and see the Presidential Palace, restored colonial churches and monuments.

Visit the Miraflores Locks Visitor Center for an overview of the lock system and then a short drive into the mountains to stay in Anton Valley, a community nestled entirely within a volcano crater. Peruse a local handicraft market filled with crafts, including the famous “mola” embroidery made by indigenous artisans.

Learn much about the geological wonders, pre-Columbian art, orchid cultivation and endangered species. Interact with makers of the famous Panama hat and cigar rollers. Taste oranges, sweets from a clay oven bakery, and sweet sugarcane juice called “guarapa” at a sugar mill. The day ends with experiencing the local culture at dinner featuring a folklore and dance show.

The next day, meet the locals and discover the various arts of creating Panamanian hats, masks and dresses, and, finally, rum distillation in Chitré.

Complete your Panama experience with a final night in your resort overlooking Playa Bonita.

With specific dates to be determined, two other trips for 2018 are:

**Highlights of Morocco**: Oct. 31-Nov. 10. 11 days, to include a Sahara Desert trip in 4X4s.

**The Best of Eastern Canada**: September. 8 days, to include Niagara Falls with a boat cruise.

The cost of each trip will be per person, double occupancy, and includes airfare, rooms, guides, transfers and most meals. Each trip allows time for exploring on your own and extra days can be added. Each trip also provides optional add-on tours during some of the trips’ stops.

All trips are organized by our travel agency partner, Collette which was founded 100 years ago. Members of the committee are: Cochairs Greg Abbott and Nancy Lewis and Ray Johnson and Susie Garrison.

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**OEA- Retired Travel 2017-18**

**Albuquerque Balloon Fiesta**
October 6-11, 2017
Six days with 8 meals and airfare is included
Highlights: Balloon Fiesta, Turquoise Trail, Sante Fe and Sante Fe School of Cooking
Cost for double occupancy, per person: $2,629

**America’s Music Cities**
March 18-25, 2018
Eight days with 11 meals, includes airfare from Portland.
The tour starts in New Orleans, continues through Memphis and ends in Nashville. Highlights include: Stays at three hotels, tours of each city, cooking demonstrations with food tasting, Louisiana swamp cruise, Graceland, live music, plantation and whiskey distillery visit, Grand Ole Opry, radio station, Tennessee State Capitol, Parthenon replica, Country Music Hall of Fame, recording studio, and much more.

**Discover Panama**:
April 19-27, 2018
Nine days with 15 meals, includes airfare from Portland.
The tour starts and ends in Panama City. Highlights for the Land Between the Seas includes: Stays at four hotels with one on a beachfront, jungle and garden walks, lunch in an indigenous village, dugout canoe ride, partial Panama Canal cruise through locks, seafood market, revitalized old quarter of Panama City, colonial churches and palaces, indigenous handicraft market including famous “mola” embroidery, orchid nursery, conservation center, sugarcane mill, museums of history and art, rum distillery, food tasting that can include a home-cooked meal, and much more.

If you want information about domestic travel, contact Susie Garrison at 541-620-0387 or susieq8170@gmail.com. For information about international travel, contact Nancy Lewis at 503-639-7050 or nancyjolewis@gmail.com.
OEA Foundation asks:
Can you help provide an incredible education?

Every day, students in our schools need -
- new school clothes
- eyeglasses
- warm winter coats
- hearing aids

OEA and OEA-Retired members across the state are helping by making tax-deductible contributions to the OEA Foundation to provide these basic needs to ensure a better education for these students.

OEA Foundation takes no administrative costs out of your donation, so 100 percent of your contribution goes directly to the students to provide the needed items.

To help our students, can you:
- ✔ Mail a check to OEA Foundation (6900 SW Atlanta St., Portland, OR 97223)
- ✔ Donate online at www.oregoned.org/oeafoundation?
- ✔ Also, you can earn redeemable points for the Foundation by registering your Fred Meyer Rewards card at www.fredmeyer.com/communityrewards (use Foundation number 85681) or similarly for Amazon at org.amazon.com.