

## PERS funding needs a big fix!

by Bruce Adams

The Oregon Public Employees Retirement System (PERS) has almost 350,000 members. Approximately 40 percent of them are active members who are working and paying into the system. The other 60 percent are either retired members or inactive members. It is the obligation of PERS to serve them all.

For over 70 years, PERS members have been making contributions to the PERS Fund. Those contributions have been invested and have added significantly to the value of the fund. This means that PERS has always been able to meet its obligations to its members. This must continue.

Every year Milliman, the actuarial firm, makes projections about the viability of the fund for the next 20 years. Lately, these projections have not been encouraging, and they indicate the need for corrective action to assure that there will be ample funding to meet commitments to PERS members.

In an effort to make the fund sustainable, new plans were implemented for new hires. This started in 1996 with Tier Two and was followed later by the Oregon Public Service Retirement Plan (OPSRP) and the Individual Account Program (IAP). The PERS Board also reduced the assumed rate of return on investments from 7.5

percent to 7.2 percent, which they consider to be a more realistic assumption. This rate will now be the basis for updated actuarial projections.

Although these measures were adopted in an effort to assure that PERS will be able to meet its long-term obligations, they have also reduced the future retirement benefits of newly hired members. For example, two people each doing the same type of job for the same employer may receive very different retirement benefits, simply because they were hired under different tiers.

This is clearly a problem, but it is not unique to Oregon. In fact, groups that compare and evaluate state retirement programs give Oregon PERS high grades. The Urban Institute and Bellwether Education Partners recently graded state retirement plans. They did not give any state an "A." Oregon and only seven other states received a "B". They also evaluated state retirement plans by how long newly hired members had to be in the System to just "break even." Oregon PERS scored very high on this measure.

The value of the PERS Fund has increased from the 2008 stock market downturn, but that is not enough. PERS is still not fully funded. That is a problem that needs a big fix. Oregon's elected leaders should make this a top priority!

## Challenges facing PERS

by Ray Johnson

The obsession over the Public Employees Retirement System, and its perceived drain on the economy of Oregon continues. The most recent attack is by a business coalition, PERS Solutions for Public Services, that just submitted 1,000 signatures each for two possible ballot measures. Not surprising, one of the chief petitioners is former Gov. Ted Kulongoski—remember what he tried to do to us?

One petition would only apply to new hires, giving them an option of choosing a 401(k) plan, or staying with the present plan but without the supplementary account and having to pay six percent of their salary into the plan.

The second petition would require the Oregon

Legislature to study 401(k) plans for new hires and submit recommendations by 2022.

In these petition attempts, and The Oregonian newspaper's usual negative rants about PERS—although its Editorial Board did agree with OEA that the PERS package that was adopted by the just-concluded legislative session did not solve any problem, and just kicked the can down the road—three pieces are ignored constantly:

1. PERS' annual economic impact study for 2018 shows that \$3.92 billion was paid in benefits to Oregon retirees and/or beneficiaries. That figure increases to \$4.22 billion for Oregon's economy when the impact of these benefits are calculated for being spent in local communities.

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# Random remarks

by President Bobbi Yambasu



I'm euphoric! A few days ago I heard that there will not be a challenge to the recently passed Student Success Act (HB 3427) on the ballot in January. I am trying to stay positive and hope that nothing changes—I did read the article on the matter and know that there could still be an attempt to repeal it later.

However, over the next months, our job remains the same—educate our communities as to what the measure will do for their schools. We need to be wary of over promising, and we will need to be on the front lines to make sure the money goes where it is intended to go. I know that we all will be working on that.

Though I do feel the weight off my shoulders as far as the Student Success Act is concerned, I know that there is more work to do. I am somewhat despondent over the loss of HB 2020 (Clean Energy Bill), the vaccination bill and the gun control bills. But those will have to wait.

Now, we can do a little celebrating, and the new

school year can start with some levity. I hope you have all been relaxing this summer in preparation for another year of great activities. I know that I really enjoy the lunches, field trips and other regional events that are organized by locals and regions for our retired and soon-to-be retired folks.

Check out the Fall activities in this newsletter—Not-Back-to-School Picnics, 4-hour duty free lunches, coffees, barbecues, etc.

And, if you find you like getting together with friends, former colleagues and new acquaintances, contact me (bobby4967@gmail.com) or Eileen Wende (ewende72@gmail.com) for information and assistance with starting your own local chapter. OEA-Retired still has some money to help startups and we can help you through the process of establishing your own group.

Enjoy the rest of your summer! And, if you happen to be in the vicinity on September 7, join me at my End of Summer party (my house, 3 p.m.- ???).



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CALENDAR	
<u>2019</u>	
August 15	PrimeTimes published
September 23	Retired Board, Salem
October 15	PrimeTimes published
Nov. 4	Retired Board, Salem
<u>2020</u>	
January 13	Retired Board, Salem
February 1	PrimeTimes published
March 2	Annual Assembly, Salem
April 1	PrimeTimes published
April 17-18	OEA Representative Assembly
May 18	Retired, Board, Salem
June 1	PrimeTimes published
June 29-30	NEA-Retired Annual Meeting
July 1-6	NEA Representative Assembly
July 13	Retired Board, Salem

# NEA hosts candidate debate

by Janis Eggert

At the National Education Association Representative Assembly, the elected delegates were able to listen to 10 of the presidential candidates to the United States.

Each of the candidates were given a questionnaire by NEA. The candidate was to complete the questionnaire and return it to NEA, and according to their responses, and if they met the criteria of education issues facing all of us in public schools, they were invited to participate in a Town Hall setting on July 5.

All members of NEA through an email were given an opportunity to send in questions that NEA President Lilly Eskelsen Garcia would ask the candidates on stage. Each candidate had a two-minute time limit to answer each of three questions as well as a one-minute opportunity to address the audience with whatever they wanted to say.

There were 10 candidates who met the criteria and sent in their questionnaires as follows: Former Vice President Joe Biden, Sen. Elizabeth Warren, Beto O'Rourke, Sen. Bernie Sanders, Sen. Kamala Harris, Julian Castro, Governor Jay Inslee, Sen. Amy Klobuchar, Mayor Bill DeBlasio, and U.S. Rep. Tim Ryan.

The common issue with all the candidates was to:

- end vouchers and charter schools.
- replace Betsy DeVos with a teacher
- provide funding for schools,

including an increase of one billion dollars for Title I and IDEA.

- provide \$100 billion dollars for remodels and new construction of public schools, and another \$100 billion for updated technology and other tools for education.
- provide funding for psychologist, counselors and media professionals, along with school nurses, security and other needed professionals to assist with educating our students.
- ensure paycheck fairness
- pass stricter background checks for guns and address safety in public schools for our students.
- fend off attacks by conservatives on school employees across our nation.
- address the Gross Pension Offset and the Windfall Elimination Provision.

In conclusion, our NEA push is to work together as educators on education issues and link those to the needs of pro-public education candidates. We should attend Town Halls whenever they are happening, engage our colleagues, make sure all the people we know are registered to vote, host house parties on candidates and issues of public education, attend events, host a debate watch party and vote. Together we can!

## Challenges

*Continued from Page 1.*

Furthermore, these payments sustained an estimated 35,449 Oregon jobs, and added \$1.27 billion (included in the \$4.22 billion above) in wages to Oregon's economy.

2. The PEW Charitable

Trusts' report for 2017 shows that Oregon PERS is rated very high for being well-funded as it is in the 80-89 percent range, which makes it one of the top 13 states.

3. The Oregonian reported in July that for the almost 6,500 PERS members who retired in 2018, the average benefit was \$26,973 per year, the median benefit was \$21,054, and the average benefit was 43 percent of the final salary figure. What usually gets reported, however, are the top 10 outliers who received from \$77,465 to \$27,522 a month.

Thus, these three indicators show how healthy and beneficial PERS is for Oregon.

## Officers elected

by Terri Domenigoni

Congratulations to our newly elected officers. The 2019 board will begin their term in July. Elected were:

Susie Garrison Secretary  
Mavis Randklev Treasurer  
Paul Schutz Region II  
Director

Vickie Jackson At Large  
Director

Janet Jackson NEA Delegate

OEA-RA Delegate/OEA-Retired Board Directors:

Cindy McDonald  
Judy Christensen

Paul Fisher

Ann Jones

Darlene Cook

Eileen Wende

Ruth Greiner

Vickie Jackson

Susie Garrison

Ardeth Woods

June Buck

Cindy Williams

Kathleen Jeskey

# Save on membership

by Terri Domenigoni

OEA-Retired membership committee wants to let you know about membership savings for you.

We are a unified organization so you must be a member of both OEA-Retired and NEA-Retired.

OEA-Retired has three membership plans that can fit any budget. We have a Lifetime plan that is \$250 for OEA-Retired membership and \$300 for NEA-Retired for a total of \$550.

The second option is to purchase an OEA-Retired Lifetime one-year payment plan. You pay \$10 with your membership application and then pay \$20 a month for one year. For your NEA-Retired lifetime membership of \$300, you can choose to pay online through the NEA website with a credit card or send the form and check to OEA.

The third option is to pay annually for both OEA-Retired and NEA-Retired. The cost is \$25 for an OEA-Retired membership and \$35 for a NEA-Retired membership for a total cost of \$60 per year.

First, if you are an annual member you may have noticed the NEA-Retired dues increased annually a few years ago and Lifetime last year. OEA-Retired dues have not gone up. If you are paying an annual membership for OEA-Retired and/or NEA-Retired, you could save money by thinking about OEA-Retired/NEA-Retired Lifetime Membership. This year if you pay your lifetime membership in full for OEA-Retired, the first 50

members will receive a \$50 rebate.

Also any member that pays for a lifetime OEA-Retired membership from the Fall mailing in August through June 15, 2020 will be included in a drawing for a fully paid Lifetime NEA membership. This rebate and drawing does not apply to the OEA Lifetime payment plan, only to those paying OEA-Retired Lifetime membership in full.

If you know someone who has recently retired, encourage them to stay involved. This is the year to become a member. OEA-Retired is making it easy to help with their cost of membership with the incentives listed above.

Are you still working? Signing up now, a Pre-Retired member can save money as the cost of our membership will increase through the years. Pay for an OEA-PreRetired Lifetime membership in full now through June 15, 2020 and you will receive the \$50 rebate and you also will be included in the drawing for a fully paid NEA membership.

All active members attending RA will be eligible for the \$50 rebate for a paid OEA Lifetime Retired membership. All who sign up for either the fully paid OEA-Retired Lifetime membership or the OEA Retired payment plan membership will be put into the drawing for a paid NEA-Lifetime membership. During the rest of the year members must purchase a fully paid lifetime membership to be eligible for the drawing in June, 2020.

Please contact me if you have any questions about membership savings at [tdomenigoni@comcast.net](mailto:tdomenigoni@comcast.net)

# Student Success wins

by Janis Eggert

A big shout out to all educators across our beautiful state for the countless other supporters who helped achieve the funding our students deserve in Oregon's Public schools. We are relieved we will not have to defend this at the ballot as business groups decided not to refer it to voters.

Your countless volunteer hours to attend rallies, Town Halls and various activities across this state of ours has paid off.

While we are basking in the success of all this, we are reminded all things come with a cost. Unfortunately, we saw a few things that we will need to continue to pursue in the very near future.

- Democrats pulled back on gun control.
- State system of paid family and medical leave, like Washington currently has.
- Mandatory vaccination.
- PERS reform for active members.
- Employer contribution to Medicare.
- HB 3434: The next state legislative session we should be building a sustainable funding model for higher education through. This bill would bring 150 million dollars to our Higher Education and would be split equally between need-based student aid and direct funding for our Community colleges and universities.
- HB 2619: This bill will be working on the Clean Energy

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## New year for books

by Janet Jackson

The OEA-Retired Literacy Project collects new and gently used books for children of all ages, birth through high school. The OEA-Retired Board also budgets money for us to purchase new books every year.

We usually shop at the Scholastic Books Warehouse Sale in NE Portland in June and at Powell's Books in December or January. Our motto is putting books into the hands and homes of Oregon Children.

On each book is placed a sticker that says, "TAKE ME HOME! I am donated to you by Oregon Education Association-Retired members."

We donate the books to places where there are children, such as clinics, social service agencies, daycare centers, pre-schools, and of course, classrooms. Our only requirement is that the books must be given to the children to take home—for keeps.

Since 2009 we have distributed 14, 485 books throughout the state. We will be distributing books at the Union Labor Day Picnic at Oaks Park on Labor Day and we hope to have a table at the Forest Grove Farmers Market one Wednesday in August.

If you would like to donate books (or money to purchase books), or if you know of a place that might like to receive books, please contact Literacy Chairman Janet Jackson at [gogirl2@comcast.net](mailto:gogirl2@comcast.net) or call 503-407-5129.

In addition, most of the regional OEA-Retired activities collect books for our project.

## Bylaws and policies for review

by Ray Johnson

With the start of another membership year, it is time to be reviewing our OEA-Retired Bylaws and Policies. The Bylaws and Policies Committee will meet in September to review proposed amendments to our governance documents for submission to the March 9 Annual Assembly.

To review the documents go to: <https://www.oregoned.org/our-association/our-members/retired/oea-retired-leadership>.

The deadline for submission of proposals to the president is January 2, but if sent in before November 1, the committee is able to handle them better.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 503-887-0467 or [rayugene@att.net](mailto:rayugene@att.net).

Members of the Committee are: Chair Ray Johnson, Ruth Greiner, Jeannette Kmetic, Mavis Randklev, Eileen Wende and Paul Zastrow.

## Feds pursue legislation

by Maureen Barnhart

U.S. Rep Suzanne Bonamici

- Continued efforts to protect students from burdensome student debt, including those attending career colleges.
- Supported integrating arts and design into STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) creates more inclusive classrooms and inspires students to be more

innovative.

- Bonamici (and Joseph Morelle, (D-NY) expressed concern that the Department of Education will divert limited funding for the Federal Work Study program to private employers without oversight to protect students.

U.S. Rep. Peter DeFazio

- The Higher Ed and AID Acts will expand options for all students, regardless of their educational path, and allow them to focus on their futures without worrying about the financial costs.
- Increased the maximum Pell Grant award from \$6,095 to \$10,230 (the average cost of in-state tuition during the 2018-2019 school year) and index the award to inflation
- Extended Pell Grants to cover short-term workforce training in order to create new job opportunities for those looking to strengthen their position in the labor market.
- Expanded Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits to students.

U.S. Rep. Kurt Schrader

Worked to reauthorize CTE grants. Schrader clearly values OEA support.

## Student success wins

*Continued from Page 4.*

Jobs Act. Today it is on a voluntary basis. However how can we expect federal departments that are dominated by industry to do an effective job protecting our environment when we know that The Dow Chemical company gave one million dollars to our current president's inaugural committee. Our work is not over.

# Look for an activity near you this fall

## Region I

(Portland Metro Area)

### Not Back to School Picnic

11 a.m.-2 p.m., September 4  
Cook Park

17005 SW 92nd Avenue,  
Tigard

Chicken and water provided.  
Last name A - I, bring salad.  
Last name J - R, bring side  
dish.

Last name S - Z bring dessert  
Also, please bring children or  
young adult books, or cash,  
for our Literacy Project.

RSVP if attending by August  
31 to: Ray Johnson, 503-887-  
0467 or rayugene@att.net.

### Ristorante Di Pompello Luncheon

11:30 a.m., October 24  
177 E, Historic Columbia River  
Hwy., Troutdale  
RSVP to Ray Johnson  
Contact information is above.



### Portland Metro Area Teachers-Retired

Join us at the beginning of  
the year with PAT members.  
Food, beverages and entertain-  
ment are provided.

### PAT Picnic

4 p.m., September 13  
Laurelhurst Park  
3756 SE Oak St, Portland

### General Meeting

10 a.m., October 10  
PAT office, 345 NE 8th Ave.  
Portland  
Coffee begins at 9:30 a.m.

## Mid- Columbia BBQ

Noon-4 pm, Saturday,  
September 28

Paul Zastrow's Backyard  
5690 Collins Road, Hood River  
Free, but BYOB.

RSVP to: Paul Zastrow at  
pzastro@gorge.net or  
541-354-1002

## Region II

(Willamette Valley and  
North Coast)

### Back to School Duty Free Lunch

10:30 a.m.-2 p.m.,  
September 3

Party Room at the  
Carousel Riverfront Park  
101 Front St, Salem

Details: Bring a salad, side  
dish or dessert to share.

Chicken, soft drinks and  
tableware will be provided.  
Food, games and prizes.

### Other Social Activities

Dates to be announced later

- Oregon Historical Museum
- Paul Jensen Collection at  
University of Oregon and trip  
to Eugene Saturday Market
- Central Valley Wine Tasting  
October or November

Questions and RSVP for all  
above to: Paul Schutz, 503-  
370-9208 or paul.g.schutz  
@gmail.com.

## Region III

### No School For Us

Noon, September, 4  
Dave's Pizza

740 Coos Bay Blvd, Coos Bay

No cost.

RSVP to: Ruth Greiner,  
541-267-3549 or reg2006  
@charter.net.

### Coffee with Colleagues

10 a.m., September 18  
Starbucks at South Fred  
Meyer Store, Medford

Details: No cost.

RSVP to Barbara Davidson at  
540-245-2729 or barbdav  
@charter.net.

## Things to do in Oregon in the fall

- Fall is apple and pear season,  
making it prime time to tour  
the Hood River Fruit Loop.
- For some of the best fall  
colors, explore Oregon wine  
country on the Willamette  
Valley Scenic Bikeway.
- In Central Oregon search for  
pumpkins at DD Ranch and  
explore the hay maze and  
petting zoo, or Smith Rock  
Ranch with a giant corn  
maze, pony rides and more.  
The settings are near Smith  
Rock State Park which is lit  
up at this time of year.
- Eastern Oregon Film Festival  
in LaGrande on October  
24-26.
- Portland Book Festival on  
November 9. Attend presen-  
tations and workshops  
during the one-day Portland  
Book Festival. A must for  
book lovers.
- Northwest Filmmakers'  
Festival on November 13-17  
in Portland. The five-day  
event showcases the year's  
best films from Alaska to  
Oregon.

# OEA- Retired Travel

2020

## Alaska Discovery Land & Cruise

Late May. 13 days with 25 meals.

Start in Alaska's Denali National Park to uncover stunning wildlife and then cruise the Inside Passage to see several glaciers on this breathtaking journey from Alaska to Washington.

Cost: \$3,709.

## Norwegian Coastal Voyage

July 12-23, 12 days with 24 meals.

Journey across Norway, starting in Oslo, by bus, train and a five-night cruise to discover stunning fjords, amazing mountains and Viking legends. Extension trips can be added to Stockholm or Iceland.

Cost: \$7,599.

Deposit due: December 30, 2019.

## Spotlight on New York City

September 10-14. 5 days with 5 meals.

Big Apple" to experience the best of this spectacular tour from Rockefeller Center to Greenwich Village to Central Park to Times Square. Also, watch the curtain rise on two exciting Broadway shows and ferry to the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island, see the Empire State Building and visit the 9/11 Museum and Memorial. There will be free time to shop and explore this fabulous city on your own.

Cost: \$2,999.

Deposit due: April 3.

## Treasures of Egypt

November 5-16. 13 days with 22 meals.

Follow the allure of the Nile as you retrace the steps of pharaohs in ancient Egypt to uncover legends beauty and history by boat and air.

Cost: \$4,749.

Deposit due: April 28.

Cost is per person for double occupancy, and includes airfare from Portland. Except for Norway, New York City and Egypt, the costs are approximate and will be finalized later this year.

For Alaska or New York City, contact Susie Garrison at 541-620-0387 or susieq8170@gmail.com.

For Norway or Egypt, contact Nancy Lewis at 503-639-7050 or nancyjolewis@gmail.com.

## Make plans to travel

by Ray Johnson

Another exciting trip for OEA-Retired members is the **Norwegian Coastal Voyage** that includes bus and train travel, and a cruise up the west coast of Norway. Norway reveals some of the world's most beautiful scenery and many once-in-a-lifetime experiences, such as reaching the highest northern point in Europe while crossing the Arctic Circle.

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## 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](http://www.oregoned.org/oeafoundation).
- ✓ Earn redeemable points by registering your Fred Meyer Rewards card at [www.fredmeyer.com/communityrewards](http://www.fredmeyer.com/communityrewards) (use Foundation number 856810, or your Amazon account at [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com) (type in OEA Foundation)).

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

## Travel

*Continued from Page 7.*

Also, a visit to a town that is only 1,304 miles away from the North Pole, and experience the Land of the Midnight Sun where the sun never sets.

The tour begins in Oslo with one day seeing its sights. From there, a train ride to the coastal town of Bergen, and a tour of its sights, before boarding the ship for a five-night cruise up the Norway coast.

## Unveiling of new retired logo

**by Ray Johnson**

Ten years ago, following our organization's name change from NEA-Retired-Oregon to the present OEA-Retired, a new logo was approved the next year. With OEA rebranding this year with its new logo, we are also updating.

You will start to see this new logo on our materials—see it on Page 2.