

PERS Board sets rates

by John Scanlan

At the last PERS Board meeting in July, they set the rate of return for the next biennium. To be more precise, the Board actually proposed the rate of return and will adopt it at the next meeting which occurs on September 29. You might wonder what this is, and why it is important.

The assumed rate of return is a best guess at what the investments, the OPERF fund, will generate over the next 20 years. Approximately 70 percent of benefits paid out are the result of earnings from the fund, which right now sits at approximately \$90B. The remaining 30 percent comes from employer and employee contributions.

The employee contribution is fairly new—for Tier One and Tier Two members, it is 2.5 percent of pay, and for OPSRP members it is .75 percent.

The setting of the rate is important for a num-

ber of reasons, but perhaps most importantly the assumed rate of return directly affects the unfunded liability. Even a small change in the assumption has a huge impact because the assumption is applied over 20 years, which also includes a compounding effect.

Two years ago, the assumed rate of return was dropped from 7.2 to 6.9 percent. While that seems like a fairly modest change, it resulted in a \$3B increase in the unfunded liability! (I sometimes joke that we can totally eliminate the unfunded liability if we simply jack up the assumption high enough!).

So the assumed rate of return determines the unfunded liability, which in turn determines the employer contribution to make up the difference. In short, the greater the liability, the higher the percentage the employer—think school districts; *Continued on Page 3.*

Literacy committee gives out 30,000 books



by Janet Jackson

By the time you read this, the Literacy Project just might have surpassed 30,000 books put into the hands and homes of Oregon children.

We've gotten a little creative finding places to donate

books. In March, Pamplin Media published the Amazing Educators Edition. We sent books to four of its Amazing Educators: Jessi Lynch, a Speech Pathologist at Sexton Mountain Elementary School in Beaverton; Shelly Orchard, a Kindergarten teacher at Mary Woodward Elementary School in Tigard; Andrea Isfeld, a fifth grader teacher at Molalla Elementary School; and Kimberly Ragan, a paraeducator at Willamette Primary School in West Linn.

In May, Pamplin Media published the Amazing Kids Edition and we sent books to two Amazing

Kids:

- David Espinoza, age 6, a student at Lincoln Street Elementary School in Hillsboro, who was described in the article as a “loving and social kid living with autism, recognized by peers and educators for his outgoing nature.” The books were sent for him to pass out to his classmates.
- Juliana Edwards, a fifth grader at McBride Elementary School in St. Helens, was recognized for always being “quick to help her fellow students and others in her community.” Juliana passed out books to the third graders she loves to help.

During the Summer we distributed books at several of the school lunch sites in Beaverton, Hillsboro and Forest Grove. And, on Labor Day, fellow Projects Committee member Kathryn Warrior and I distributed 228 books at the Labor Day Union Picnic at the Clackamas County Fairgrounds in Canby. We got a kick out of the many parents who picked up “Miss Nelson is Missing,” and recalled reading it and loving it when they were young!

Random remarks



by **President Eileen Wende**

Greetings from Upstate New York, where the temperatures are cooling and the leaves are just starting to turn. It is hard to believe that Fall is officially here and for me that means

my time here reuniting with family and friends is drawing to a close..This year marked the occasion of my 60th High School Reunion, where it seemed to me, we were happier than ever to see each other.

Many of our members celebrated OEA-Retired Not-Back-To School events in all three OEA Regions, everything from backyard Bar BQs, organized picnics in area parks to meeting up for coffee in local coffee shops. Our members were happy for the opportunity to meet and socialize, as they kicked off yet another year of retirement. Please watch for announcements of future opportunities of get togethers in your area.

All three Regions reported on their activities at

our September 11, 2023 Board Meeting, which was a hybrid meeting, enabling travelers, such as myself, to participate. Louis DeSitter, the current Manager of OEA Government Relations, addressed the Board. He believes that the 2024 Short Session of the Oregon Legislature, will have low activity, while the issues around the Republican's walkout during the 2023 Session are resolved. It looks like there will be little or no opportunity to address issues important to retirees or educators.

A highlight of 2024 for OEA PAC members will be the 2024 OEA PAC Convention to be held in Eugene on March 8 & 9, 2024. OEA will be considering endorsements for the Oregon Secretary of State, Treasurer, Attorney General, as well as, all six of our Congressional Representatives. Three of these Congressional Districts are expected to be hotly contested. It is shaping up to be a critical convention and any \$5 or more OEA-PAC contributor is eligible to attend. Go online to OEA-PAC to read more about the PAC and donate during this critical election cycle and become eligible to be a delegate to the 2024v OEA PAC Convention.



PrimeTimes
October 2023

Volume 36, Number 2

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PrimeTimes, the official publication of OEA-Retired, is published five times a year as a benefit of membership.

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CALENDAR

2023

- October 15 *PrimeTimes* published
- Oct. 16-17 OEA-Retired Fall Conference, Coos Bay
- Nov. 6 OEA-Retired Board Meeting, Salem

2024

- Jan 8 Retired Board Meeting, Salem
- Feb. 1 *PrimeTimes* published
- March 4 OEA-Retired Annual Assembly, Salem
- March 8-9 OEA PAC Convention, Eugene
- April 1 *PrimeTimes* published
- TBD NEA-Retired Leadership Conference, Chicago
- April 19-20 OEA Representative Assembly, TBD
- May 20 OEA-Retired Board Meeting, Salem
- June 1 *PrimeTimes* published
- July 8 OEA-Retired Board Meeting, Salem

Ray Johnson recognized

Congratulations to longtime OEA-Retired member, Ray Johnson, for being awarded runner-up for his work on the OEA-Retired website and PMAE-Retired newsletter. We are so fortunate that he continues to volunteer for our retired group.

PERS

Continued from Page 1.

local governments; prisons; etc.—pays. When the assumption is lower, these budgets are squeezed, potential layoffs happen, and services are reduced.

The question you may have now, is: How accurate have these assumptions been? The answer is remarkably accurate.

The actual rate of return over 25 years has exactly matched the assumption. How can we reliably predict what the next 20 years will bring? In all honesty, I still don't entirely understand the methodology, but I marvel at the actuaries that advise the Board. They really know their stuff.

This round the PERS Board left the rate unchanged at 6.9 percent. Therefore, the employer contribution will remain stable and budgets will be predictable. The data suggested that it would not have been unreasonable to increase the assumption slightly, but they opted to take a conservative approach.

On another entirely different note, the IRS changed the calculation of withholding rates for pensions and the result for me was that I faced a

federal tax bill of \$5,000! I decided to file a W-4P (pension withholding) that increased my withholding to, what I hope, will be an adequate amount. You may want to consult with a tax professional to review your withholding and get the correct amount withheld.

Effects of a shut down

by Maureen Barnhart and
Pam Wojcik

By the end of September, the Federal Government may have set a budget. Whenever a budget impasse comes to shutting down the government, some of the consequences include:

- Social Security and Medicare applications for seniors and people with disabilities stop, leaving vulnerable Americans waiting for benefits.
- Thousands of children could be removed from Head Start and other federal childcare programs, leaving working families without the support they need.
- National Parks close, causing Americans to delay or cancel vacations and open our national treasures up to damage.
- Inspections for drinking water and food safety will come to a halt.

Congress avoided a shut down at the 11th hour but it needs to come up with a budget that can be agreed upon in 45 days.

The Oregon Delegation, is working on several issues.

Sen. Jeff Merkley is tackling environmental improvements for tribes, especially water, restoring kelp forests for ocean

health and legal assistance for immigrant survivors of domestic violence.

Sen. Ron Wyden wants to make voting more accessible with options like universal vote-by-mail, because everyone deserves to participate in our democratic process.

Congressional District (CD) 1, Rep. Suzanne Bonamici has introduced a Bill of Rights for Students and Parents, a comprehensive resolution that serves as a blueprint for public education rooted in evidence-based practices that support teaching, learning, and family engagement. It will serve as a direct contrast to recent proposals that pit parents against educators.

CD 2, Rep. Cliff Bentz, held a hearing titled "The North-west at Risk: The Environmentalist's Effort to Destroy Navigation, Transportation, and Access to Reliable Power."

CD 3, Rep. Earl Blumenauer, secured a \$703,046 grant for the Feed'em Freedom Foundation to support the Black Community Food Center.

CD 4, Rep. Val Hoyle is working on expanding rural health care in Lane County and lowering prescription drug prices.

CD 5, Rep. Lori Chavez-DeRemer is working on a bipartisan homeless bill, expanding affordable housing, helping homeless vets and eliminating the chance for tolling in Oregon.

CD 6, Rep. Andrea Salinas is urging Congress to eliminate anti-LGBTQ parts in the Defense bill. She thinks progress can be made despite partisanship. Also, getting help for farmers to deal with extreme weather conditions.

PAC needs your help

OEA-PAC is OEA's political action committee (PAC). We use money that is voluntarily contributed to elect pro-public education candidates. Our PAC program is also coordinated with the National Education Association's federal PAC, which serves as our voice in Washington.

Political decisions affect our classrooms, jobs, students, families and retirement benefits. Our union is facing unprecedented attacks and our profession and funding are under constant threat; we can't afford to sit on the sidelines. The most powerful tool we have is to join our OEA-PAC.

Join thousands of your fellow Oregon educators in contributing monthly to OEA-PAC and make your voice heard!

Make your contributions on the OEA website.

Be a member

by Viki Mulick

Many thanks to the Region 1 members who came and helped stuff envelopes for the Fall Membership Mailing on August 7. It all seemed to go smoothly until ... it didn't. We intended to have our annual pay members sign up through our new online program, but we encountered a couple of glitches.

We appreciate everyone's patience as we come up with the fixes. At this point, all annual pay members should have received their fall mailing information and directions on how to pay online. If you are an

annual pay member, and you have not received any information, to make it right, please contact Chere Mills at c.mill.wea@gmail.com.

Nominations are open

by Mavis Randklev

Greetings fellow OEA-Retired members. Our 2024 election is coming up soon. The following positions are up for election in 2024: president, vice president, Region I director, NEA-Retired Annual Meeting/NEA Representative Assembly delegate, and OEA Representative Assembly delegate/OEA-Retired Board Member.

If you are a current OEA-Retired member you are eligible to run. Please consider running for an office.

Walkouts are not a strike

by Maureen Barnhart

With this incongruous statement, five of the six Oregon state senators who were understood by voters to be ineligible for reelection to the same position will file in opposition to the will of the 68 percent of voters who expect their representatives to do the job for which they were put in office.

Some of you have been challenged to see the walkout as similar to a labor strike. Members of the OEA-Retired Legislative Committee met to compose this resource to counter that comparison.

A strike is a refusal to work organized by a group of employees as a form of protest,

typically in an attempt to gain concession(s) from their employer. It is done within the parameters of a union contract, after a contract has expired. Educators who strike generally do so to gain increased wages, additional benefits and improved working conditions.

Educators who strike go out in mass, they are not paid. And, there are a series of steps that must be accomplished prior to striking. The buildup before a strike is a democratic process, and requires a vote of all members before implementation.

A labor union walkout is a planned work stoppage for a certain number of hours or days. Those involved may not hinder or prevent work. Such hindrance has been unlawful under Federal regulation since the 1930s.

In contrast, a state legislative walkout is by a coordinated group of legislators (typically those in the minority party) who leave the state capitol to prevent a quorum. The legislative walkout is not designed to help the dialogue but to create barriers and stop the passage of certain bills.

Oregon legislators who walked out are not part of a union. Oregon legislators who walked out still were paid. Oregon legislators who walked out prevented the work of the legislature.

And a majority of voters—the 68 percent mentioned earlier—statewide passed the constitutional measure that declares that not doing the work of the Legislature means that the individual may not run for the same seat in the consecutive session.

The measure passed in 34 of the 36 Oregon counties.

Region I

by Ray Johnson

This month will see the start of our monthly luncheons, beginning at 11:30 a.m., October 26 at Babika Hen, 15964 Boones Ferry Rd, Lake Oswego.

We completed a successful event with our new Sweet Treats & Happy Hour on September 5. It was a beautiful sunny day, with a lot of conversation, as well as the enjoyment of eating the amazing desserts.

Please RSVP to Ray Johnson at rayugene@gmail.com or 503-887-0467.



Happy Hour with Region I educators on September 5 at McMenamain's Edgefield.

Region II

First Tuesday Breakfast

10 a.m.-Noon, November 7

Sybil's Omelettes

2373 State St., Salem.

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

Region III

Southern Oregon
Coffee & Visit

When: November 15

South Medford Starbucks
Fred Meyer

1301 Center Dr.
Medford

Details: Coffee and a sweet provided by OEA-Retired.

RSVP: Judy Richards at jarich7138@gmail.com.



by Marleen Wallingford

Breakfast at the Cricket Cafe

9:30 am, November 9

3159 SE Belmont

Visit the German American Society

5626 NE Alameda St Portland,

Date: November TBD

The German American Society connects people with German and American heritage. Tour their cultural center and learn about the history of German immigrants to Portland

Tour the Columbia Gorge Railroad

2505 N Vancouver

Date: December 2 or 3

TBD only open on weekends

Founded in 1943, the Columbia Gorge Model Railroad Club (CGMRRCC) boasts a layout of the Columbia River Gorge with more than 30 operators going at one time. The volunteers made an exact replica of our beautiful Gorge.

General Meeting

9:30 a.m. December 14

PAT Office, 345 NE 8th Ave.

We will have our annual book share and \$15 lunch.

RSVP to Marleen Wallingford to above activities at 503-927-marleenwong@gmail.com or 2766

We remember

Pamela Bloom
Willamina
8/25/23

Robert Carlton
Baker City
1/14/40-2/1/23

Kristin Tamson Gates
Lake Oswego
1/19/47-2/4/22

Marsha Miller
Eugene
1941-2/24/23

Pamela Morris
Salem
3/15/46-8/25/23
Pam was a member of the OEA Credentials Committee

Elizabeth Reanier
Eugene
8/13/31-2/17/23
Liz taught at Churchill High School. After retirement, she served on the OEA-Retired Board.



Steven Travis,
Dallas, Or
8/15/51-9/1/23

Steven Travis was a teacher at Dallas High School for 27 years. He was a past president of the Dallas Education Association and served on the OEA-Retired Board.

Get back to travel

by Ray Johnson

Would you like to discover the magnificent ruins of ancient Greece and bask in the brilliance of the Mediterranean? Then join us on our Exploring Greece and Its Islands tour in May of 2024—see sidebar for details.

This comprehensive journey explores Greece's most important ancient monuments, including the famed Temple of Zeus, the archaeological site of Olympia and ancient artifacts of Delphi. And, explore Athens on a tour of the incredible Acropolis.

Visit a local farm in the countryside to see how olive oil and wine are produced. Learn how to cook traditional Mediterranean cuisine during a cooking demonstration.

Wander the winding streets, vineyards, marketplaces and beaches of Mykonos and Santorini after arriving by boat. Explore the excavations of the ancient city at Akrotiri, the most important prehistoric settlement found anywhere in the Eastern Mediterranean. Learn the history of this fascinating country from local experts on guided tours of Athens, Meteora, Delphi, and Olympia.

Throughout your journey, experience the iconic sights of Greece's Classical age with ample time to explore on your own. It is a Level 3 activity, which is on-the-go walking for more than 90 minutes with equivalent activities.



Enjoy the beauty of Santorini and leave the planning to Collette.

OEA-Retired Travel 2023-24

Exploring South Africa, Victoria Falls & Botswana

February 2-16, 2024. 15 days with 29 meals.

Cost: \$7,599.

Deposit of \$698 due July 10, 2023.

Final payment due December 4, 2023.

For more information or reservations, go to

<https://gateway.gocollette.com/li>

Exploring Greece and Its Islands

May 9-24, 2024. 16 days with 24 meals.

Cost: \$5,999.

Deposit of \$698 due November 10, 2023.

Final payment due March 10, 2024.

For more information or reservations, go to

<https://gateway.gocollette.com/link/1154557>

National Parks of America

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

Cost: \$5,949.

Deposit of \$698 due March 14, 2024.

Final payment due July 16, 2024.

For more information or reservations, go to

<https://gateway.gocollette.com/link/1154565>

Spain's Classics & Portugal

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

Cost: \$5,699.

Deposit of \$698 due April 13, 2024.

Final payment: August 13, 2024.

For more information or reservations, go to

<https://gateway.gocollette.com/link/1154566>

Patagonia: Edge of the World

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

Cost: \$10,299.

Deposit of \$898 due July 7, 2024.

Final payment: October 16, 2024.

For more information or reservations, go to

<https://gateway.gocollette.com/link/1154552>

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

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

Fall conference highlights

by Vickie Jackson

We missed you at the OEA-Retired Fall Conference in Coos Bay! The south coast was a unique place to explore from the Pacific Ocean up the canyons of Coos County to the old volcanoes, a true treasure trove.

We offered tours of a distillery and the old newspaper building plus a variety of workshops highlighting the Southern Oregon Coast. The accommodations were spacious and the food fresh. Two days before the conference there was an annual solar eclipse in Coos Bay.

The South Slough is a research area where scientists learn about the natural ecology of the area and can measure tsunamis from far away. The area is great for growing cranberries and the “sweet” shops in the area feature all sorts of goodies.

Our Annual Assembly will be March 4 in Salem. This is our annual meeting, and all are welcome to attend. Save the date and come to learn about topics that affect retired educators.

Our history

by Ray Johnson

We continue to reminisce about our past years.

35 years ago

Our Pre-Retirement Workshops included handing out the Oregon Pre-Retirement Handbook and an AARP booklet.

30 years ago

A PERS representative reported that the states’ taxing of PERS benefits was ruled legal by the Oregon Supreme Court, but it was a breach of contract. He said legal suits would be filed to determine “how much was going to have to be paid and by whom” to remedy the error.

25 years ago

Several members accomplished their goals—Alice Collier joined the One More Time Around Again Marching Band that annually plays at the Portland Rose Festival Grand Floral Parade, Bob McKean played all 17 public golf courses on the Oregon coast, but skipped the two resort ones as “they are beyond my retirement budget,” and Pat Cole, became a Court Appointed Special Advocates to help make up for the “lack of response” that she observed from the state’s Children’s Service in dealing with her students who needed help.

20 years ago

For the second time this year, three of our member—Ruth Robinson, Jerry Wilkins and an unidentified person—were mentioned in the NEA-Retired magazine.

15 years ago

Several members attended the first retired Golf Tournament in Salem with Paul Schutz, Allan Holland and Marty Bronstein sharing the championship honors.

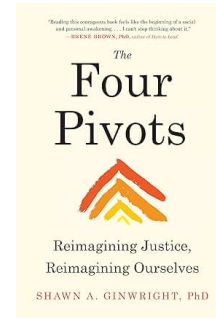
10 years ago

A representative from the Oregon Attorney General’s office presented at the Fall Conference and talked about how to avoid scams and fraud.

5 years ago

With OEA rebranding its media presence, we also received a revised logo that is

on Page 2 and a new website.



Social justice discussion

by Bobbi Yambasu

Interested in educating yourself on equity and social justice issues? Want a place to discuss your reading on those topics? Well, we have a book club for you!

The Equity and Social Justice Book Club had its first discussion of this year. On September 22, we discussed “Homegoing” by Yaa Gyasi. A great read!

Our next book is “The Four Pivots: Reimagining Justice, Reimagining Ourselves” by Shawn A. Ginwright. Our discussion will be held via Zoom at 9:30 a.m. on November 3. If you would be interested in joining us, we would love to have you. Just send me your name and email to bobbij4967@gmail.com and I will add you to the Book Club list.

Join us for one book, some books or all the books.

Also, if you would like a list of the books we have read so far, email me at the above email, and I can send it to you.

Want to start an OEA-Retired Book Club in your region or area? We can set up a Zoom link for you (or, if you are lucky, you can meet in person!).



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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OEA Foundation asks:
***Can you help provide
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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.

- ✓ Can you mail a check to **OEA Foundation**, 6900 SW Atlanta St., Portland, OR 97223) to help our students, or 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.

**Have you moved
or changed
your email?**

Contact: Nikki Burke
Oregon Education Association
2540 Coral Ave NE, Salem OR 97305
503-364-6987
nikki.burke@oregoned.org

**Thank you to the OEA-
Retired Board who
voted to send a
donation to the Hawaii
Public Schools
Foundation for Maui
relief.**